BEYOND THE CULTURALIZATION OF THE HEADSCARF: WOMEN WITH HEADSCARVES IN RETAIL JOBS IN 2000s TURKEY

A PhD Dissertation

by
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Ankara
March 2014

To my grandmother Faize Kutlu and my son Umut

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Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

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I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

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ABSTRACT

BEYOND THE CULTURALIZATION OF THE HEADSCARF:
WOMEN WITH HEADSCARVES IN RETAIL JOBS
IN 2000s TURKEY

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This dissertation studies the roles and meanings of the headscarf in the lives of lower middle class, non-university educated women working in private sector retail jobs. The study critically discusses the extent to which the dominant framework of politics of cultural difference, identity and a focus on Islamic/ secular divide in society in Turkey accounts for the connotations of the headscarf in low status and insecure private sector employment. The study problematizes the overemphasis on issues of cultural difference and identity in post-1990 studies on women, Islam and headscarves in Turkey and suggests an analytical framework that accounts for social inequalities rather than cultural difference. Secondly, it problematizes the reification of Islamic group identity in previous literature, and

complicates the dichotomous categorization of ‘secular’ and ‘Islamic’ identities as two ‘oppositional’ sources of belonging. The study relies on in-depth interviews and focus groups conducted with saleswomen, as well as participant observation in five cities in Turkey: İstanbul, Ankara, Denizli, Gaziantep and Kayseri. The findings are twofold: (1) In the retail sales job market, women with headscarves are constructed as a labor force more inclined to settle for insecure, dead-end, low-paid jobs. The discriminatory employment policies that disadvantage women with headscarves are embedded in the problems of workplace democracy, and problems of unqualified, insecure women’s labor; (2) Lower middle class, non-university educated women with headscarves formulate the practice of wearing the headscarf as a continuously negotiated practice, with meanings contingent upon class and status cleavages, instead of formulating it as a matter of deep religiosity, identity and cultural difference.

Keywords: Headscarf, veiling, politics of cultural difference, politics of identity, class, gender, retail sales

ÖZET

BAŞÖRTÜSÜNE KÜLTÜREL YAKLAŞIMLARIN ÖTESİNDE: 2000'LER TÜRKİYE'SİNDE PERAKENDE SATIŞ SEKTÖRÜNDE ÇALIŞAN BAŞÖRTÜLÜ KADINLAR

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Bu tez, özel sektörde satış işlerinde çalışan alt-orta sınıf, üniversite eğitimi olmayan başörtülü kadınların hayatında başörtüsünün rollerini ve anlamlarını incelemektedir. Çalışma, kültürel fark, kimlik politikaları ve Türkiye'de İslami/seküler ayrımına odaklanan analitik çerçevelere eleştirel yaklaşmakta ve bu analitik çerçevelerin, düşük statülü ve güvencesiz çalışma hayatı bağlamında başörtüsünün anlamlarını tahlil etmekteki kısıtlarına dikkat çekmektedir. Bu tezde, Türkiye'de özellikle 1990 sonrası kadın, İslam ve başörtüsüne odaklanan çalışmalarda kültürel fark ve kimlik konularına yapılan yoğun vurgu ile sosyal eşitsizliklerin gözardı edilmesi sorunsallaştırılmaktadır. Bu tez, ayrıca, önceki çalışmalarda Türkiye'de İslami/seküler kimliklerin birbirini keskin şekilde

dışlayan aidiyet biçimleri olarak konumlandırılmasına eleştirel yaklaşmaktadır. Araştırma çerçevesinde, İstanbul, Ankara, Denizli, Kayseri ve Gaziantep'te katılımcı gözlem çalışmaları yapılmış, satış işlerinde çalışan başörtülü kadınlarla derinlemesine mülakat ve odak gruplar düzenlenmiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları iki başlık altında özetlenebilir: (1) Başörtülü kadınlar, satış sektöründe, güvencesiz ve düşük ücretli işlerde çalışmaya uygun bir işgücü olarak konumlandırılmaktadır. Bu sektördeki ayrımcı istihdam politikalarını anlamlandırmak, İslami/seküler ayrımından ziyade vasıfsız, güvencesiz kadın emeğinin sorunları çerçevesinde mümkün olmaktadır; (2) Araştırmanın odaklandığı alt orta sınıf, üniversite eğitimi olmayan başörtülü çalışan kadınların örtünme deneyimlerine ilişkin söylemlerinde, örtünme, sürekli müzakere edilebilen, sınıf ve statüye göre anlamı değişen bir pratik olarak kendini göstermektedir. Bu bulgu, örtünmenin tüm başörtülü kadınlar için kimlik, kültürel aidiyet ve dindarlığın ayrılmaz bir parçası olduğu tezinin sorgulanması gerekliliğini beraberinde getirmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Başörtüsü, örtünme, kültürel fark politikası, kimlik politikası, sınıf, toplumsal cinsiyet, satış sektörü

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Statement of the Problem

This dissertation arose out of my concern about the deep fault line that the headscarf has come to represent in society in Turkey. This fault line figures as a major theme in portrayals of society as polarized between two sections: Islamic and secular. I am uncomfortable with the widespread portrayal of a woman with a headscarf as representing one of those 'worlds' mainly for two reasons. First, this portrayal is symptomatic of the tendency to analyse society in Turkey through culturalist lenses at the expense of folding issues of social inequality into cultural difference based social stratification. Second, the headscarf gets to be loaded with essential connotations: Women with headscarves are attributed a fixed and reified identity, reduced to being the representatives of one lifestyle pitted against the other.

The dissertation revolves around two major discussions: First is about the (over)emphasis on cultural difference, identity and its recognition in studies of Islam, women and headscarves in Turkey. Especially post-1990 period witnessed

the surge of academic studies that locate the predicaments of women with headscarves within a critique of Kemalist modernization project, particularly the critique of the ways in which this project excludes Islamic cultural difference from the public sphere, and imagines a homogenous, uniform identity for the 'Turkish citizen'. The headscarf, especially the predicaments of women with headscarves who were excluded from the secular, modern imagination of 'Turkish woman', became almost a litmus test exposing the limits of homogenizing aspects of Kemalist modernization project. The necessity to acknowledge, include and recognize differences and particularities, especially the necessity to recognize Islamic lifestyles and cultural codes were emphasized through the theme of the excluded and stigmatized women with headscarves. This critique was a valuable attempt which opened avenues to challenge the homogenizing imagination of 'the Turkish citizen'. However, I argue that this framework captured the headscarf issue within the parameters of a culturalist outlook (Göle, 1993; 1997a; 1997b; 2000a; 2000b; 2000c; 2003; İlyasoğlu, 1994; 1998; Bilici, 2000; Çayır, 2000; Suman, 2000; Navaro Yashin, 2002; Saktanber, 2002; Kentel, 2008). This led to reducing women's problems to issues of Islamic cultural difference, identity and recognition. In turn, the problem of cultural difference and identity has been insulated from the ongoing social structural processes rooted in unequal access to resources and encroachments of patriarchy in family life and in the labor market.

The second major issue concerns the reification of Islamic group identity as a coherent, clearly bound source of belonging. This reification is related to the imagination of society in Turkey as sharply divided into cultural poles, where the 'secular' and 'Islamic' figure as two strictly separate, oppositional cultural

sources of identity. This reification of identity loads the headscarf with essentialized connotations, and portrays women with headscarves as the representatives of Islamic group identity. These sharp distinctions drawn between 'secular' and 'Islamic' women preclude a comprehensive feminist vision that would encompass common problems of women in Turkey. They also lead to expectations conferred upon women with headscarves. Women with headscarves are expected to set examples of how to lead an Islamic life, abide by modesty codes of *tesettür* in both appearance and attitude, and make their choices in life so as not to contradict the message that the headscarf is supposed to convey. In other words, they are expected to remain within the limits of the imagination of a coherent identity marked by the headscarf. I argue that the post-1990 academic studies (Göle, 1993; İlyasoğlu, 1994; 1998; Özdalga, 1997; 1998; Kadıoğlu, 1999; Çayır, 2000; Suman, 2000; Saktanber, 2002; Navaro Yashin, 2002), while rightfully highlighting the significance of recognizing and respecting Islamic difference for a more democratic polity and society, nevertheless suffer a limitation to question the inner coherence of group identities in Turkey. In an effort to subvert the stereotyping, stigmatization and exclusion of Islamic identity, the headscarf issue has been located as a modern means of resistance and subversion against the grain of top down secularization and against homogenizing aspects of the modernization project. Indeed, this academic discourse contributes to the questioning of a Western centric notion of modernity in favour of exploring the possibilities of non-Western, alternative modernities. It also challenges the stigmatizing portrayals of the headscarf as a sign of backwardness or failure to become 'modern' in a Western centric sense. However, it falls short of

challenging the dichotomous portrayal of Islamic vs. secular identities, hence reinforces the notion that the headscarf essentially connotes an authentic, indigenous declaration of Islamic difference deeply rooted in culture and identity.

This dissertation focuses on lower middle class, non-university educated, urban women with headscarves who work as retail saleswomen in five urban centers in Turkey: İstanbul, Ankara, Denizli, Gaziantep and Kayseri. Drawing on qualitative research data consisting of focus groups, in depth interviews and participant observation study, it investigates how the roles and meanings of the headscarf unfold within an insecure and relatively low status job market, and questions the extent to which the framework of cultural difference based on Islamic vs. secular dichotomy can account for these roles and meanings. The findings of the research reveal the precarious position of women with headscarves working in retail sales jobs and provide insight to the intricate and complex relations between problems related to cultural 'misrecognition' (such as exclusion from certain retail settings, i.e. chain stores and shopping malls) and problems related to socioeconomic inequality, including gender and class stratification. In other words, the findings reveal the insufficiency of folding working headscarved women's problems into the problem of 'cultural 'misrecognition''[1]. The research also explores how lower middle class, non-university educated working women with headscarves respond to the 'mission' of representing a clearly bounded, coherent, non-contradictory, authentic Islamic identity. The findings suggest that

[1] 'Cultural misrecognition' here is employed in line with Charles Taylor's usage of the concept. 'Cultural misrecognition' denotes the situations where an individual and/or a group is denied respect and recognition because they remain out of the mainstream hegemonic norms of cultural identity in a society. Taylor (1994) contends that misrecognition "can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (p.75).

the respondents' narratives about their own practices of covering do not fit into the framework of cultural difference and identity. The findings reflect a tendency to keep open the possibility for negotiations of covering, uncovering, re-covering. These negotiations are intermeshed with patriarchal bargains[2], as well as aspirations for higher status jobs. Moreover, the narratives reveal the participants' effort to distance themselves from the missions loaded on the headscarf, such as displaying a coherent, clearly bound Islamic identity.

The dissertation also investigates the demarcation line between working settings that employ and do not employ women with headscarves by looking into the discriminatory practices in employment. Women with headscarves are excluded from employment in some retail settings, such as chain stores and shopping malls. Working conditions in Turkey already suffer serious problems of workplace democracy, especially with regard to discrimination in employment process. The employers are not bound by clear laws and regulations in terms of making their employment decisions accountable (Karan, 2007; Yenisey, 2006). On the other hand, woman workers, especially less educated ones, are regarded as a particularly disposable, flexible labor force. These problems figure as serious disadvantages for those who seek low status and unqualified jobs, especially for people of unprivileged ethnic, religious identities, and for women. The

[2] The concept of 'patriarchal bargain', coined by Deniz Kandiyoti (1988), emphasizes the life strategies women employ under different contexts and different material conditions. She suggests that by analyzing women's strategies in dealing with the patriarchal structure they live in, it is possible to identify different forms of patriarchy, as well as accounting for the variations according to class, caste and ethnicity (Kandiyoti, 1988, p.275). Exploring the patriarchal bargains refers to taking into account both the social accommodation and resistance strategies of women, rather than taking them as passive victims. Moreover, the concept implies that different social and economic contexts bring different practices of patriarchy.

discrimination against the headscarf is entangled within these problems related to working conditions. Unlike the dominant focus on the Islamic/secular divide in the analysis of exclusion of the headscarf from the public sphere, understanding the exclusion of the headscarf from some private sector retail jobs requires a comprehensive point of view that accounts for the problems of workplace democracy, women's labor, and the specific 'misrecognition' of the headscarf at the same time.

All in all, the dissertation approaches critically the Islamic vs. secular dichotomy, which is being employed frequently in analyses of various inequalities and social stratifications in Turkey. By developing an approach sensitive to patterns of inequalities based on class and gender, the dissertation suggests that we should look beyond the Islamic vs. secular dichotomy to see how processes of cultural 'misrecognition' interact and intermingle with social, structural patterns of inequalities.

This chapter proceeds with a brief critical account of the salient patterns in previous research on Islam, women and headscarves. I then delineate the ways in which my study differs from previous research. The third section outlines the debate on the concepts of politics of difference and recognition, and how this debate maps onto the headscarf discussion in Turkey. Last, I delineate the contributions of the dissertation and the organization of the chapters.

1.2. Brief Outline of the Dominant Patterns in the Literature

In this dissertation, I critically investigate the dominant theoretical frame-works through which the headscarf issue has been analysed especially following

the 1990s, a period which witnessed a major proliferation in scholarly studies focusing on the rise of Islamic politics and the surge in the visibility of an Islamic lifestyle among urban middle class. The increasing visibility of young, urban, educated women with headscarves in the public sphere aroused sociological interest as it challenged the expectation that religion and religious signs were bound to wither away as a result of urbanization, education, economic development, i.e., processes inherent to modernization. This scholarly interest culminated in a series of influential studies in the 1990s focusing on the roles and meanings of the headscarf in the lives of young, urban, educated women (Göle, 1993; İlyasoğlu, 1994), the predicaments they face due to the headscarf ban in state monitored public sphere (Özdalga, 1998), and the significant role of religious Muslim women within the quest to create an Islamic, urban, middle class lifestyle (Saktanber, 2002). The focus later on shifted towards investigating the transformation of Islamic woman identity from a collective identity towards individualized identities. Changing patterns of consumption, particularly the consumption of '*tesettür* fashion' drew the attention of social scientists (Kılıçbay and Binark, 2002; Genel and Karaosmanoğlu, 2006; Sandıkçı and Ger 2001, 2007, 2010; Gökarıksel and Secor, 2009; 2010).

One of the pioneering and most influential studies published in early 1990's is Nilüfer Göle's *Modern Mahrem* (The Forbidden Modern), which exemplifies the contours that dominated the headscarf discussion in Turkey for many years to come. In this study, Göle argues that the Kemalist modernization project endorsed Westernization as a civilizing mission and traces the significant role of shaping lifestyles, tastes, gender relations and clothing in accordance with

Western norms in the course of realizing this mission. She locates the headscarf issue within this context and contends that headscarf among urban, young, educated women, symbolizes the claim of offering alternatives to the Western connotations attributed to civilization and modernity. Accordingly, urban headscarf connotes the will to assert difference against the universality claim of Western modernity. In succeeding studies, Göle (1997 a; 2000a; 2000 b) developed arguments that highlighted the role of educated women with headscarves in terms of suggesting possibilities of non-Western modernities, and pointed out that these women are seeking recognition of a modern identity they assert through accentuating cultural difference made visible by the headscarf (Göle, 1997b; 2003).

In parallel to Göle's line of argumentation, in the 1990s and early 2000s, the headscarf discussion revolved around the theme of asserting Islamic difference as a source of collective identity against the established hegemony of Western lifestyles in Turkey. Among the recurrent themes were the subversive effect of the educated, urban women's headscarf against being assimilated to the Western model of modernity, and the search for the recognition of Islamic difference through making it visible. This significance of recognition of difference and the traumatizing effects of its lack have particularly been stressed with regard to the contexts where the individual encounters the state (Çınar, 2005, 2008; Göle, 1997, 2002), especially the university, where there used to be a ban on headscarves (Kejanlıoğlu and Taş, 2009). The case of a woman Member of Parliament, Merve Kavakçı, whose appearance in the parliament in 1999 met with huge reaction that culminated in taking away her parliamentary status, clearly demonstrated the

exclusionary aspects of state secularism in Turkey in its encounters with Islamic difference and has been analyzed in several studies (Göle, 2002; Göçek, 1999; Cindoğlu and Zencirci, 2008[3]).

The focus on the headscarf as a visual declaration of collective identity tended to shift towards investigations of individualization among young, urban, educated women with headscarves. It is possible to read this shift within the context of two broader transformations. On the one hand is the surge of Islamic capital (Buğra, 2002; Demir, Acar and Toprak, 2004), its interaction with globalization (Kösebalaban, 2005; Kuru 2005), and the fragmentations and contradictions that surfaced within Islamic identity (Çayır, 2008). On the other hand, the crash on political Islam in 1997, known as the February 28 process, has lead to a shift in Islamist discourse from an outright objection to Western influences towards endorsing Western criteria of democracy and human rights. Islamist intellectuals grew sympathetic towards especially the European Union and its requirements related to freedom of conscience and religion as an antidote to the arbitrary and exclusionary practices of the February 28 process, particularly to argue against the headscarf ban (Kubilay, 2010). An alternative explanation to this discursive shift relates it to the global wave of promoting 'liberal Islam' at peace with human rights and freedoms in order to counter the Islamophobic reactions in the post – 9/11 period (Gülalp, 2003b: 22).

[3] Cindoğlu and Zencirci (2008) draw attention to the need to differentiate between state sphere such as universities, parliament and public sector jobs, and the public sphere such as public gardens, coffee houses, etc., instead of taking the 'national public sphere' as a spatial metaphor that encompasses all. I agree with the necessity of such a differentiation, and thus I use the concept of 'state monitored public sphere' to refer to universities, the Parliament and public sector jobs.

These investigations of individualization among women with headscarves mainly unfolded in two strands. First strand accentuated women's potential to improvise hybrid forms of modernity (Göle, 2000d) and a self reflexive identity (Çayır, 2000) through the effort to reconcile the dictates of Islam with their individual transformation. Here, individual transformation was taken to be an outcome of Islamist political activism, modern education and professional life (Göle, 2000d; Çayır, 2000; Azak, 2000). Second strand focused on the transformation of consumption patterns among women with headscarves that was argued to bring about a transformation from 'pious women' towards 'modern consumers' as well as from a collective Islamic woman identity to fragmented and individualized identities (Kılıçbay and Binark, 2002; Navaro Yashin, 2002; Genel and Karaosmanoğlu, 2006; Sandıkçı and Ger, 2001, 2007, 2010; Gökarıksel and Secor, 2009; 2010).

1.2.1. Culturalization of the Headscarf

Whether the headscarf is portrayed as a collective resistance against assimilation into the storyline of Westernized, secularized woman, or as a 'lever' in an individual search for improvising new storylines embedded in the possibility of alternative modernities, women with headscarves are nevertheless portrayed as necessarily deriving their references of identity from piety and cultural difference. I refer to this widespread portrayal as 'culturalization of the headscarf'. Insofar as identity and culture stand out as the sole objects of research, the headscarf gets to be loaded with the mission to symbolize Islamic identity and continues to be viewed as the symbolic line that separates the two cultural poles in the

dichotomous portrayal of society. The headscarf also figures as a blanket of culture that covers and mitigates the differences related to unequal access to resources such as income and education. The culturalization of the headscarf taps into an abundant focus on cultural difference in analyses of the society in Turkey (Alemdaroğlu, 2011) particularly when it comes to the question of Islam and women, at the expense of overlooking other sources of social inequalities[4].

1.2.2. Abundant Focus on the Middle Class

The resilient view of the headscarf as the signifier of cultural difference, owes to the almost exclusive focus on the urban, middle class Islamic groups, relatively more educated women with university degrees, professional occupations and/or a background of political activism (Göle, 1993; İlyasoğlu, 1994; Özdalga, 1998; Saktanber, 2002; Sandıkçı and Ger, 2010; Aldıkaçtı Marshall, 2005, 2009; Özçetin, 2009). Tuğal (2004) and Alemdaroglu (2011) point out that scholars focused exclusively on middle class Islamic groups in order to "falsify the modernisation assumption that religion belongs to the rural, uneducated and poorer people" (Alemdaroğlu, 2011: 37). Indeed, studies of Islamic urban groups that are upwardly mobile in terms of economic, cultural and social capital (Saktanber, 2002) have yielded valuable results such as demonstrating the formations of an 'Islamic middle class ethos' (Saktanber, 1997), and the active role of women in such formations. However, the highlight

[4] Alemdaroğlu (2011), in her dissertation on youth culture in Turkey, questions and criticizes what she calls the 'habitual negligence of socioeconomic inequalities by culturalist approaches to Middle Eastern societies' (p. 15). To counter this negligence, she focuses on the experiences of young people with regard to their access to resources and their relation to socioeconomic transformations, rather than the much more frequently employed focus on religious identity and culture.

on the Islamic taste and lifestyle that distinguishes Islamic middle class from secular middle class results in a focus on cultural difference and identity. As Alemdaroğlu argues,

> ...If one focused on identity as an object of research, one also reifies that identity, unless it is analysed in its relational context in order to figure out how these relations are contributing to the making of that identity, not only from the identity-holder's point of view, but also in terms of the actual political, economic, symbolic and everyday relations that cultivate differences. (Alemdaroğlu, 2011: 37)

In parallel with Alemdaroğlu's critique, I think that the focus on identity precludes the question of the Islamic middle class' ways of distinguishing themselves from the lower middle class. In other words, the class cleavage and related contradictions and tensions among 'Islamic' groups have not been regarded as significant a contradiction as the cultural cleavages between Islamic and secular middle class groups[5]. In this context, the headscarf has been approached as a symbol of cultural difference which sharpens cleavages based on culture and identity, whereas it mitigates, if not erases, class and status differences among women who wear it. The ways in which the concept of the 'new headscarf' or the 'new veil' is employed in analyses is symptomatic of this missing class cleavage. The concept has been extensively used in order to denote a sharp rupture between traditional uses of the headscarf and 'modern', 'new' veiling. Accordingly, 'traditional' headscarf is donned due to family influence and those who wear it are

[5] Cihan Tuğal (2004) points out that since the 1990s, scholarship in Turkey has been invested in portraying proponents of Islamism as middle class and conscious, as opposed to 'rural, backward and ignorant', hence the dominance of middle class focus in research agenda. He argues that the focus on middle class "missed the creative (not simply 'rural' and 'ignorant') input of non-middle class sectors in the movement" (p.517). Indeed, there have been more recent studies which highlight the class cleavages and related tensions among Islamic population. Yasin Durak's study (2011) in which he looks into the way labor relations are shaped among religious employers and employees in Konya, should be acknowledged among these studies.

keeping their piety to the private realm. In contrast, 'new veilers' are taken as the new generation of urban women with headscarves concerned with displaying cultural difference against the grain of the secular public sphere that excludes difference. Nilüfer Göle (1997 b) argues that the new veiling connotes a transformation from private piety to Islamic identity, personal knowledge of Islamic texts, and that the 'new veilers' are engaged in a Bourdieun struggle to load the concepts such as 'civilized', 'modern' with Islamic ethics and aesthetics. Jenny White (2005) criticizes the distinction drawn between 'conscious' religiosity and 'unconscious' adherence to tradition, arguing that this is actually symptomatic of the elitism inherent in Islamist intellectual discourse. According to White, the image of 'conscious' women in *tesettür* only reflects Islamist elite women; "the editors, writers, intellectuals, mid-class activists, Islamist yuppies (White 2005: 125). She further contends that academic discourse supports this distinction by focusing intensely on new Islamist elites moving Islam from the periphery to the center. I agree with White on the point that this categorization of 'new veil' and 'traditional headscarf" need to be questioned by accounting for differences related to class and the level of education in the making of 'modern', 'new' veilers'. The concept of 'new veiler' that is so frequently employed, has not been questioned on basis of different level of access to resources, but has been used as a wholesale definition to connote the distinction of urban, young women with headscarves from elder, rural covered women. As most headscarf research focuses on middle class, university educated women or university students, there is a void in terms of accounting for the experiences of lower middle class, relatively less educated women with the headscarf. Which discourses do they tap into

while formulating their practices of covering? What kind of different experiences arise from class cleavages, different levels of education, and different positions in the labor market? Are there contradictions and tensions stemming from these differences? Insofar as middle class, educated women with headscarves remain as the sole focus of research, and insofar as their story, however significant, dominates research agenda, the questions above are precluded and the headscarf is taken as a symbol that makes women who wear it a unified group designated by common cultural and religious references.

1.3. How This Research Differs From Previous Studies

This study relies on the findings of research conducted in five cities of Turkey; İstanbul, Ankara, Gaziantep, Denizli and Kayseri between 2009 and 2012. The research consists of 13 focus groups, 31 in-depth interviews, several short interviews and participant observation study. The majority of research participants are women with headscarves who work in private sector retail sales jobs. The methodological concerns, the story of the field and the socio-demographic characteristics of the research participants are elaborated in detail in chapters 3 and 4. Here, my objective is to delineate the ways in which this research distinguishes itself from the dominant trends in research on women, Islam and the headscarf in Turkey.

First of all, unlike most post-1990 studies on women with headscarves in Turkey, the majority of respondents who participated in this research are lower middle class women. Also, the majority of respondents do not hold a university degree. Focusing on this group has made it possible to contextualize their experi-

ences in comparison to the storyline of middle class, more educated women that we most frequently encounter in previous studies. Furthermore, the group of respondents includes women of different marital status and age groups, which makes it possible to account for relationalities with regard to norms of 'acceptable womanhood' that differ among age groups and married, single or divorced women. Sensitivity towards the relationality of experiences with the headscarf helps to avoid falling into given conceptions that equate the headscarf with Islamic identity and cultural difference. A significant finding of this research is that the participants formulate the meanings and roles of the headscarf in their lives in ways that are multilayered and fragmented. In these formulations, the headscarf may be loaded with substantially different connotations depending on a woman's class position, status of her job, level of education, age, marital status, family relations, and so on. These narratives do not fit into, and sometimes even sharply contradict with the narrative of the will to display Islamic identity and cultural difference.

Second, this research focuses on women working in private sector retail jobs[6]. This gives way to push the discussion on the headscarf into new territory. Previously, the headscarf issue has been located within the discussion on public sphere, particularly state monitored public sphere such as the university and public sector jobs, or the parliament. Actually the academic popularity of the headscarf issue owes to the fact that the state's exclusion of the headscarf demonstrates the limits of civilizing state secularism. These limits have been

[6] Previous studies that investigate the working lives of women with headscarves in Turkey focus on university educated women with professional occupations (Cindoğlu, 2010; Jelen, 2011) and highlight their predicaments in terms of being excluded from public sector jobs as well as the effects of this ban in private sector jobs.

frequently explored through the predicaments of women with headscarves – especially university students- who suffer tense encounters with the state. However, focusing on the private sector jobs makes it possible to look beyond the state monitored public sphere. This dissertation looks into the patterns in which women with headscarves are subjected to categorization, exclusion and exploitation in the private sector labor market. Indeed, this categorization and exclusion share common roots with the exclusionary policies in the state monitored public sphere. Yet, there is more to it. In the case of private sector jobs, the exclusion of the headscarf is also entangled with the problems of workplace democracy, such as the lack of a legal framework preventing discrimination in the process of employment. Such problems make relatively low status jobs more precarious especially for people of unprivileged ethnic, religious or gender identities. Furthermore, the precarious position of women with headscarves in a low status labour market is also embedded in the problems of women's labour, especially in low status jobs, such as being located as cheap and disposable labour. Unlike the formal, thus more visible and objectionable headscarf ban in public sector jobs, the informal patterns of exclusion in certain private sector jobs are invisible and normalized along with the exclusion of other 'differences', ranging from ethnic to gender based differences. The point is that, looking into the private sector labor market and situating the predicaments of women with headscarves in the context of workplace democracy and women's labor helps to see different levels concerning the categorization and exclusion of women with headscarves in working life.

At this point, an explanation regarding the choice of the retail sales jobs and retail working settings as the field of research is in order. Retail sales jobs are consumer contact jobs hence being a saleswoman inevitably means being visible, unlike working in a factory or a garment atelier. Most retail sales jobs do not require a university degree, and the employees have been from among lower middle class women since the birth of modern retailing (Benson, 1986). Therefore, retail jobs are a useful venue to access lower middle class, non-university educated women. These jobs are mostly low status, insecure, dead end and temporary, especially in small scale retailers. Yet, they are different from other relatively lower status jobs such as cleaning jobs, because saleswomen are required to 'adapt the veneer of a higher class' (Benson, 1986: 5) and represent the company they are working for in face to face relations with the customers. In the case of small scale retailers that cater to close neighbourhoods and maintain close relations with loyal clients, saleswomen are required to be in conformity with the norms of appearance and attitude that prevail in the relevant setting. This is another layer of visibility in sales jobs. These aspects make the retail sales settings a fruitful field to trace the ways in which the headscarf and its connotations play out in the process of job search, in working life and in direct relations with the customers.

One of the findings of this research is that the search for a retail sales job is a difficult endeavour for a woman with a headscarf. Retail jobs in shopping malls, large scale retailers such as international and national chain stores are mostly unavailable for women with headscarves. Employers usually do not refrain from expressing that they prefer to work with uncovered women. On the other

hand, women with headscarves are advantaged when it comes to working in a *tesettür* store. Other than *tesettür* stores, they are employed in small scale retailers such as family owned shops, small neighbourhood shops. Among these different working settings there are profound differences in terms of working conditions, relations with employers and customers, and the social implications of being a saleswoman. By looking into the demarcation lines drawn through the headscarf among different retail settings, this study traces the implications of the headscarf in the context of an insecure and precarious job market.

To recap, this study distinguishes itself from previous research on the headscarf by focusing on the experiences of lower middle class women with headscarves, and by contextualizing those experiences within the private sector labor market, within a relatively low status and insecure working setting. The objective is to develop an analytical framework sensitive to social class, level of education, and gendered experiences in working life that assign various roles and meanings to the headscarf. Developing such a framework is significant as it opens new avenues to think beyond the Islamic / secular divide and beyond the approach that contextualizes the headscarf exclusively as a symbol of contestation in terms of culture and identity in the public sphere. Social inequalities based not only on culture and identity, but also based on class and gender, produce and assign various meanings and roles to the headscarf. The labor market is a venue in which we can observe how those social inequalities act upon women with headscarves, how women deal with those inequalities, and what the headscarf means in this effort of dealing with a low status, insecure working setting.

1.4. Conceptual Terrain: Critical Perspectives on Politics of Cultural Difference and Recognition

In this section, the objective is, first, to lay out the discussion revolving around the interrelated concepts of politics of difference and politics of recognition, highlighting the critical perspectives on the ways in which they are employed. I then delineate how this conceptual framework is employed to form the backbone of analyses regarding women, Islam and the headscarf in Turkey, and why the critical perspectives on these concepts are relevant. This discussion is important for it provides us with the theoretical insight to develop a critical regard of the 'culturalization' of the headscarf.

1.4.1. Politics of Recognition and 'Group Difference'

The debate on recognition and difference are significant for the purposes of this dissertation because the headscarf discussion in Turkey predominantly revolves around these themes. Women with headscarves are taken as a group in pursuit of gaining recognition for an Islamic difference that they are supposed to be declaring with the headscarf. Before going into the ways in which these concepts are imported to the issue of the headscarf in Turkey, it is necessary first to lay out the fundamentals of the concepts and the critical discussions revolving around them.

Charles Taylor, in his milestone text titled *The Politics of Recognition* (1994), underlines that identity and recognition have become sources of concern in the modern era due to two processes. First is the collapse of social hierarchies and the transition from the feudal concept of 'honor' to the concept of 'universal

dignity'. Second is the flourishing idea of 'individualized identity'; i.e. the idea that we have an 'inner depth', an individual source of searching for what is good and right. Individualized identity also means that there is a unique way of 'being human' to every individual. The attempt to gain recognition to this 'unique way' becomes an issue in modern societies. According to Taylor, it is not that people who lived in earlier societies did not care about 'recognition', rather, they took recognition for granted. What differentiates the modern individual in this regard is his/her anxiety over the possibility that the attempt to be recognized can result in failure.

Taylor's account of the politics of recognition highlights two pillars: The first pillar is his Hegelian emphasis on the dialogic character of identity. In other words, he underlines the importance of social contact on the formation of identity: "We define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us" (Taylor, 1994: 79). The second pillar is the argument that, as identity is formed through dialogue with others, 'misrecognition' by others may inflict huge harm on a person ***or*** a group.

> The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or a group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (Taylor, 1994: 75).

The important point to note here is that the 'misrecognition' of a person, and the harm inflicted on a person is paralleled to the harm inflicted on a group. Furthermore, it is argued that recognition granted to groups is significant for the flourishing of group members' individual identity (Taylor, 1994). This argument

is important for discussing the limits of citizenship, social justice and the capacity to embrace cultural diversity in liberal democracies. It points out that by endorsing a 'difference blind' approach, liberal democracies are not promoting equality. To the contrary, by denying recognition to groups who define themselves in terms of different cultural identities, they set those groups at a disadvantage.

The defence of a politics of difference arises out of this opposition against the dominant liberal paradigm of social justice which, for the sake of equality, views a universal, abstract, disembodied subject as stripped from his/her particular social position in terms of class, gender, race, sexuality, religiosity, and so on. In contrast to the 'politics of universal dignity' which endorses respecting the 'human potential' that is in every human being, without paying any attention to their particularities, hence in a difference blind fashion; 'politics of difference' defends extending recognition to particularities (Taylor, 1994). The 'difference – blindness' of what Taylor calls 'politics of universal dignity' has come under criticism[7] for setting norms of existence actually tailored for the particularities of privileged groups as 'neutral' and 'universal' standards (Young, 1990; 2007).

Iris Marion Young's book *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (1990) is among the major works that sets the theoretical foundations of a politics of difference against "the ideal of liberation as the elimination of group difference"

[7] Among such criticism is the feminist objection to the claim of universal equality. For example, Carol Pateman (1989) offers a genealogy of social contract theorists' claim of seeking "universal freedom" and demonstrates that the "free individual" is imagined as a man, who is defined through the negation of characteristics attributed to women. Scott (1992) makes a similar point: In liberal political theory, the meaning of "the political" is constructed by negating feminine attributes. This sort of criticism also involves strong objection to liberal feminism and has roots in the equality vs. difference debate. See Irigaray (1985, 1991) for a defense of sexual difference. For discussions on the feminism of equality vs. feminism of difference debate, see Goux (1994), Schor (1994), Stavro (1999).

(Young, 1990: 157). In this study, Young defends that "equality as the participation and elimination of all groups sometimes requires different treatment for oppressed or disadvantaged groups" (p.158) in order to be inclusive. She argues that the absence of such different treatment pushes some groups to adopt an identity that they do not actually endorse. What is a group, then, and on what basis can we talk about a 'group'? Again, according to Young,

> A social group is a collective of people who have affinity with one another because of a set of practices or way of life, they differentiate themselves from or are differentiated by at least one other group according to **cultural** forms" (Young, 1990: 186, emphasis mine).

The quotation above demonstrates Young's view of groups as defined primarily by culture in this book. Moreover, Young's book also upholds the view that asserting and underlining a disadvantaged, stigmatized difference in positive terms and holding on to that difference as something that distinguishes and defines the group, is emancipating for groups who suffer oppression. In other words, Young's account not only gives prominence to 'culture' in defining groups, but also sees the prospects of emancipation in asserting and underlining group difference.

The politics of recognition and politics of difference could be seen as two levels in a broad project of developing a relatively more inclusive understanding of social justice and democracy. The concept of recognition as in Taylor's understanding underlines the importance of "a human need to be recognized in one's *distinctness*, especially *cultural* distinctness" (Blum, 1998: 73). Young's book goes into the question of how to defend that distinctness, or 'difference' especially if that difference is subjected to stigmatization, humiliation and/or oppression in the face of dominant, privileged norms in a society. Her answer is,

to put very briefly, to underline difference and assert a "positive group cultural identity" (Young, 1990: 159).

1.4.2. Critical Perspectives

Even though the outline of politics of recognition and difference above is a brief one, it summarizes the major arguments that contour the discussion. Fundamentals of the politics of recognition and difference briefly discussed above came under criticism from various vantage points. Here I would like to highlight two lines of critique which address the major limitations. First line concerns the relegation of difference and recognition to *cultural* difference and its recognition. This line of critique questions the attitude of mapping the boundaries of groups solely on differences related to culture and lifestyle. This critique includes approaches sensitive to class and issues of redistribution. Second line of critique draws attention to the reification of group identity and ossification of groups at the expense of overlooking the porousness of group boundaries and the fluidity and relationality of identities. Furthermore, this critique points out the possible tensions between groups and individuals who do not conform to norms of the groups they are supposed to belong to.

1.4.2.1. First Critique: Displacement of Social Equality

One of the main discussions on the politics of difference and recognition revolve around the critique of the almost exclusive focus on the recognition of cultural difference and the inequalities stemming from the lack thereof, at the expense of overlooking the social inequalities rooted in problems of

redistribution. This is a point that has been most extensively put forth and argued by Nancy Fraser.

Fraser acknowledges that the concern with the recognition of diverse identities is promising in terms of enlarging the understanding of social justice. Yet, she "never loses sight of equality as a primary goal of recognition" (Blum, 1998: 73). Whereas she does not reject the significance of recognition of one's identity and cultural distinctness, she is critical of the tendency to replace the goal of social and political equality with the goal of cultural recognition. She takes issue with this paradigm which she calls the 'identity model' of recognition. By 'identity model', Fraser (2000) means the politics of recognition as put forth by Taylor, a model based on a Hegelian master/slave model of identity; according to which identity is constructed through mutual recognition. This model emphasizes the injuries inflicted on groups as a result of denied recognition and stigmatization by the dominant culture. In the main contours of her argument, which she develops through decades of studies and debates with other theorists (Fraser, 1995, 1997a, 1997b, 2000, 2003, 2007, 2008; Fraser and Honneth, 2003) Fraser contends that as political struggles exclusively attach themselves to politics of recognition, which is increasingly equated with identity politics (Fraser, 2000), demands and claims related to distributive justice are marginalized and overlooked. She claims that as social movements increasingly voice their claims in the frame of an identity based model of 'recognition', the 'egalitarian distribution' frame becomes less and less salient (Fraser, 1995; 1997a; 1997b; 2000; 2003).

> Claims for the recognition of group difference have become intensely salient in the recent period, at times eclipsing claims for social equality.

> This phenomenon can be observed at two levels. Empirically, of course, we have seen the rise of "identity politics," the decentering of class, and, until very recently, the corresponding decline of social democracy. More deeply, however, we are witnessing an apparent shift in the political imaginary, especially in terms of which justice is imagined… With this shift, the most salient social movements are no longer economically defined "classes" who are struggling to defend their "interests" … and win "redistribution". Instead, they are culturally defined "groups" of "communities of value" who are struggling to defend their "identities, end "cultural domination" and win "recognition". The result is a decoupling of cultural politics from social politics, and the relative eclipse of the latter by the former. (Fraser, 1997a: 2)

In Fraser's account, this decoupling of cultural politics from social politics results in overlooking the redistributive dimension of justice. The material injustices closely connected to injustices in the symbolic and cultural realm, are either elided or eclipsed as secondary. This, in Fraser's (2000) terminology, is the problem of *displacement*. In other words, Fraser is concerned with the concentration of political claimsmaking on issues of cultural difference, and its recognition.

To my understanding, Fraser's critique is important for it demonstrates the pitfalls of seeking the roots of all injustice in the lack of recognition of one's identity and culture. She argues that by focusing solely on the predicaments of cultural 'misrecognition', we are eliding the predicaments stemming from other sources of inequalities, most importantly maldistribution. Therefore, her vantage point suggests highlighting how 'misrecognition' of one's identity and culture is related to class hierarchies. Furthermore, her account also highlights the view that substantive equality cannot be reached solely by the struggle to attain the recognition of one's identity and culture. She does not mean to underestimate the

importance of injustices against cultural identities, but suggests looking at the relations between cultural and social inequalities.

Iris M. Young's conception of politics of difference in her aforementioned book, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* is specifically targeted by Fraser in a debate unfolding in a series of articles published in the *New Left Review* in the 1990s. In this debate, Fraser (1997a, 1997b) criticizes Young for prioritizing cultural recognition at the expense of the problems related to structural economic injustices. Young (1997) criticizes Fraser for dichotomizing demands related to recognition and redistribution and for denouncing politics of difference altogether[8].

Despite their former differences in approach, Young, in a more recent study (2007) partially shares Fraser's concern about the domination of politics of difference by issues of culture. In this study, Young differentiates between 'politics of cultural difference', and 'politics of positional difference'. In a critical intervention which I find very similar to Fraser's, Young criticizes politics of cultural difference for overstating issues related to religion and culture and for ignoring structural problems such as poverty, unemployment, poor education. As opposed to the politics of cultural difference, she defends politics of positional difference which responds to injustices stemming from "structural processes of

[8] For details see Fraser (1995, 1997a, 1997b), and Young, (1997). For a full account of Young's theorization of politics of difference, see Young (1990). For a debate that revolves around similar questions of recognition and redistribution, see Fraser and Honneth (2003). In this book consisting of the articles of Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth on issues of recognition and redistribution, Honneth, contra Fraser, designates "distribution conflicts" as one of the facets of struggles for recognition. Furthermore, he argues that the motivational base of all sorts of social conflict is actually 'disrespect', i.e. lack of recognition. Honneth's account, according to which distribution conflicts are subjugated to recognition conflicts, is a perfect example of what Fraser criticizes

division of labor, social segregation, and lack of fit between hegemonic norms and interpreted bodies" (Young, 2007: 74).

Young's account focuses on the 1990s as the decade which witnesses this domination. Whereas Fraser blames the "postsocialist Zeitgeist" and the preclusion of demands regarding egalitarian distribution, Young contends that it is the rising ethnic nationalisms and the focus on ethnic, national and religious differences that brought about the domination of 'culture'[9]. She asserts that "public debates seem to displace the structural problems onto issues of culture" (Young, 2007: 83), overlooking problems such as poverty, structural exclusion from status, income and employment. She opposes defining groups based on cultural attributes and defends that groups should be defined on the basis of being "similarly positioned on axes of privilege and disadvantage through structural social processes" (Young, 2007: 75). By defining groups on the basis of sharing structural social privileges or disadvantages, she implicitly distances herself from her own former definition of groups as defined by cultural forms.

The critical discussion revolving around the domination of cultural difference and its recognition in the search for justice provides insight in terms of developing a fresh outlook on what I prefer to call the culturalization of the headscarf in Turkey. How do we trace the context specific processes through which the headscarf has been culturalized in academic discourse in Turkey, and how do we relate them to the global tendency to overemphasize cultural

[9] Young (2007) criticizes Will Kymlica's "Multicultural Citizenship" (1995) as a notable example of the increasing interest in "cultural" difference which draws solid boundaries around groups with the assumption of a coherent cultural identity. Kymlica's concept of "societal culture" is especially under Young's scrutinization. For other criticisms of Kymlica's approach to cultural difference, see Benhabib (1999; 2002).

'misrecognition' problem at the expense of overlooking social and economic inequalities? Haldun Gülalp (2003b) argues that the 'center-periphery' framework endorsed by Şerif Mardin (1973) forms the subtext to the cultural analyses of the rise of Islamic influence in political and social life in Turkey. From this perspective, the rise of political Islam and the rising popularity of Islamic lifestyles are explained through a struggle between the response of the periphery defined by Islamic 'social ethos' against the grain of Kemalist state's trends of Westernization and secularization and against dominant secularist sections of society (i.e. center) privileged by their attachment to the Kemalist state. When the center-periphery distinction is centralized as the major locus of social stratification in Turkey, cultural difference and the struggles to gain recognition to lifestyles and cultural codes are viewed as the major source of conflict in society. The center - periphery framework indeed derives its popularity from its strength, as it provides insight to the failures of the modernization theory for its expectations of the withering away of religion and religious signs from public life and culture. Gülalp (2003b) concedes that Islamism in Turkey has been successful in terms of bringing together different classes by formulating its cause within a discourse of cultural difference and struggle against the 'civilizing' Westernization project of Kemalism. Yet, he retains, globalization, transformations in political economy, the global demise of the state centered economy, and the concomitant global postmodern questioning of modernization and Westernization are the actual fundamental dynamics behind the rise of Islamism in Turkey. Therefore, he argues against collapsing the social basis of political Islam under a wholesale cultural category of 'periphery' and draws a

tripartite class based distinction among this social base: (1) Anatolian based small and medium sized capital that benefit from the surge of contract manufacturing in global economy, (2) Upwardly mobile, university educated professional middle class conservative elite, which Göle (2000 c) would define as 'counter elites', (3) Rural to urban migrants or marginalized urban lower classes mostly remaining outside organized labor and formal employment (Gülalp 2003b: 59).

In other words, Gülalp criticizes the cultural focus stemming from the 'center-periphery' framework in explanations of the rise of Islamic influence in social and political life by suggesting an alternative political economic explanation. It is possible to locate the culturalization of the headscarf within this critique. This domination of the center - periphery framework spills over to the studies of women, Islam and the headscarf because the rising popularity of the headscarf is also viewed as a part of the struggle to gain recognition to cultural codes and lifestyles (Göle, 1993). Gülalp (2003b: 43) also points out that the studies of the headscarf which utilize the center-periphery framework almost exclusively focus on university students and professional middle classes; i.e. classes which according to Gülalp already are defined by stratifications in cultural capital rather than class position. Therefore, according to Gülalp it is not surprising that research conducted only with professional middle classes yield results that verify the predominance of a struggle in the realm of cultural codes. Hence, the class distinctions among women with headscarves and the implications of these distinctions in terms of the roles and meanings of the headscarf remain in need of examination.

Even though the problem of 'misrecognition' of the identity that is perceived to be symbolized by the headscarf is a significant problem, the precarious position of lower middle class, less educated women with headscarves in working life can neither be totally explained, nor remedied by focusing solely on the problem of 'misrecognition'. Focusing *only* on the cultural stigmatization of the headscarf leads us to overlook and disregard the problems related to social and structural equality, such as problems of workplace democracy and women's labor. Furthermore, focusing solely on the recognition of identity leads to constituting women with headscarves as a group based on cultural attributes, overlooking the social stratification *among* them. It also misleads us towards a view of society based on cultural enclaves, disregarding the common problems of women subjected to exploitation and patriarchal practices in the labor market, regardless of whether they wear a headscarf or not. Fraser's effort to establish the links between issues of recognition and redistribution also provides critical insight to question the strong focus on recognition and culture when it comes to the issue of the headscarf. This dissertation discusses how the processes of 'misrecognition' of the headscarf and problems such as exploitation and workplace democracy in the retail sales sector intermesh, through looking closely into the designation of women with headscarves as a particular type of labor force in the retail labor market. More specifically, it analyses the social distinctions between retail working settings that do and do not employ women with headscarves, and the connotations loaded on the headscarf in sales jobs. That is a significant point where the exploitation problem meets the recognition problem, and how they interrelate. Looking into this interrelation demonstrates that when the problems of

women with headscarves are portrayed as sheer cultural 'misrecognition', we are missing out the interactions between the 'misrecognition' and precariousness in the case of lower middle class, working women with headscarves.

1.4.2.2. Second Critique: Reification of Group Identity

The idealization of a Western path of modernization and the expectation that Islam and Islamic signs will wither away as the society advances in this path, has operated as a way of stigmatizing women with headscarves as backward and unable to keep up with the requirements of modernity. The focus on the recognition of Islamic identity is valuable as an attempt to dismantle Western centric definitions of civilization and modernization in Turkey. The theoretical support to the recognition of ways of life formerly labelled as 'traditional, Islamic thus backward' is an impressive political and theoretical intervention. What would be more impressive, however, would be to question the inner coherence of group identities and the sharp distinctions drawn between the lifestyles of women who are supposed to belong to 'secular' and 'Islamic' sections of society in Turkey.

Let me now go back to the critical discussion on politics of recognition and difference to make my point clearer. The second line of critique concerns the reification of group identities at the expense of ignoring the porous boundaries between 'cultural groups' and the relationality of identities. When Charles Taylor (1994) accentuates that the recognition of distinctness for the healthy development of identity, he does not differentiate between individual and group levels:

> …With the politics of difference, what we are asked to recognize is the unique identity of this individual or group, their distinctness from everyone else. The idea is that it is precisely this distinctness that has been

> ignored, glossed over, assimilated to a dominant or majority identity. (Taylor, 1994: 38).

Taylor underlines the harms inflicted on a group's sense of worth as a result of processes of collective 'misrecognition', such as oppression and marginalization. This analogy between individual and collective levels is related to the contention that the modern self is constituted through the web of interlocution consisting of culture and language. As the self is formed in dialogue with the constituents of one's culture, the recognition granted to or withheld from one's culture and web of interlocution will lead to distortions such as lack of self respect or self esteem. According to Taylor, an inseparable part of the search for recognition is the modern self's search for an ideal of authenticity. He puts the idea behind this ideal as follows: "There is a certain way of being that is my way. I am called upon to live my life this way." (Taylor, 1994: 30) He presumes that the search for authenticity is not hindered, but enabled, by subscriptions to collective identity.

Such emphasis on the distinctness of identity and culture without differentiating between individual and group levels has been subjected to much criticism (Appiah, 1994; Blum, 1998; Fraser, 2000; Benhabib, 2002; Phillips, 2007). Criticisms focus on two major points: First, the emphasis on 'distinctness' of culture and identity leads to the reification of group identities as "intrinsically oppositional" to each other (Phillips, 2007: 20) and second, as homogeneous in themselves (Fraser, 2000; Benhabib, 2002). Benhabib (2002) criticizes the attitude of envisioning groups as if they were entities with solid boundaries. Instead she emphasizes the conflicts and power struggles within groups, as well as the idea

that "…Individual claims to authentic self-expression need not run in tandem with collective aspirations to cultural recognition. They may even contradict one another." (Benhabib, 2002: 52).

Even though the idea of 'authentic group identity' initially aims to dismantle the stigmatization of certain particularities in the face of the mainstream norms of society, it also gives way to the creation of new norms under the banner of 'authenticity'. In other words, what starts as a progressive antidote to the stereotyping of excluded groups, turns into a means of creating a 'cultural straitjacket' for those who are associated with those groups (Phillips, 2007). This is one critical point that has been voiced especially with regard to the multiculturalism discourse and its portrayal of non-Western, particularly Muslim minority groups living in Western contexts.

Anne Phillips, in her book titled *Multiculturalism without Culture* (2007) voices concern over the retreat of multiculturalism in the Western world, especially in the post-9/11 era. She argues that as anti-multiculturalist discourse gains popularity, the stereotypical portrayals of non-Western cultures as profoundly and essentially distant from human rights, democracy, and gender equality reappear in favour of Western centric definitions of these concepts. However, she also argues that the multicultural project shoots itself in the leg by accentuating cultural differences instead of challenging exaggerated representations of boundaries between cultures:

> But it is one of the ironies of the multicultural project that in the name of equality and mutual respect between peoples, it has encouraged us to view peoples as more systematically different than they are. In the process, it has contributed to forms of cultural stereotyping that now help whip up opposition to multiculturalism. (Phillips, 2007: 25)

Now when Phillips poses this critique, the context that she predominantly has in mind is that of Western societies with immigrant, especially Muslim immigrant populations. Yet, I contend that the problem she detects within the multicultural project is relevant to the analyses of society in Turkey insofar as those analyses overemphasize a crystallized cultural difference between the 'Islamic' and 'secular' sections of society. One clear example of this is the parallels drawn between France and Turkey in terms of the secularist anxieties provoked by the presence of the headscarf in public sphere. For example, Göle (2012: 57) contends that in both countries, the headscarf, as the visualization of Islamic difference in the female body, is found as a threat against the secular ideal of gender equality. However, the difference between France and Turkey in terms of how the headscarf is positioned in the social imaginary cannot be overemphasized. And this is not only because we are talking about the exclusion of *immigrant* identity in the case of France. As Scott (2007) demonstrates, the heated headscarf discussion in France is rooted in a deeper anxiety stemming from the perception of the inassimilability of Islam to French national identity. She traces this perception through the acute difference between how the French and Islamic gender systems manage sexuality[10]. Accordingly, in sharp contrast to the Islamic way of keeping sexuality to the private realm, the French endorse the visibility and desirability of the female body as the fundamental tenet of managing sexual difference. Actually, this emphasis on the visibility of the female body had

[10] Another factor that loads the headscarf with a plethora of meanings and fuels anxieties in the French social imaginary is related to the colonial legacy: As Najmabadi (2006) reminds, unveiling women was very central to the French project of colonizing Algeria as it was imagined as a metaphor of penetrating and assimilating Algerian culture. Hence, the veil is loaded with the meaning of resistance against 'becoming French'.

long been criticized by the French feminists for objectifying women, Scott contends. However, as a response to the increasing presence of the Muslim immigrant population and the surge of the headscarf discussion, a majority of French feminists left their critical position against the French gender system. Furthermore, a discourse equating sexual liberation with equality and freedom became politically salient (Scott, 2007).

Is it possible to talk about such an emphasis on sexual liberation in the Kemalist state project of modernization and secularization, and is there such a sharp difference between the secular and Islamic imaginations of the female body in the context of Turkey? On the one hand, controlling public – private boundaries and drawing those boundaries through controlling women's bodies and clothing, was central and significant to the Kemalist state project of modernization (Çınar, 2005, 2008). The participation of women in the public sphere and in professional life without challenging the state endorsed codes of appearance was championed, and those codes of appearance excluded the headscarf from state controlled public sphere. It is true that the headscarf is a challenge to the paternalistic politics of appearance pursued by the Kemalist project of modernization. Yet, on the other hand, this politics of appearance also prioritized and emphasized the preservation of women's sexuality in the private realm and its invisibility in the public sphere. Actually, this point has been widely addressed in the feminist critique of Kemalist modernization project. It has been argued that even though women were encouraged to work outside home, the notions of modesty and chastity remained central to how female sexuality was handled (Kandiyoti, 1987; Ertürk, 1991; Z. Arat, 1994; Cindoğlu, 1997; Durakbaşa, 1988; Kadıoğlu,1994). In other words,

the heated discussion over the headscarf in Turkey is less about a profound and 'inassimilable' difference between the Islamic vs. state endorsed sexual politics – as in France- than it is about a contestation on setting the norms of visibility for the educated, publicly visible, middle class 'Turkish woman'. Perhaps this is one reason why, when donned by lower middle class women (Gülalp, 2003a), or women who do not have a claim to be 'modern', educated women visible in the public sphere (Göle, 2002), the headscarf does not provoke a strong reaction.

This does not mean that the problems women with headscarves face in Turkey are less important than in France. However, it does mean that those problems are less likely to be grounded in a deep sociocultural fissure. The point here is that, when the predicaments of women with headscarves in Turkey are located in the framework of a deep and irreconcilable 'cultural difference', we are not only replicating the classical problem of the multicultural project that is formulated as 'exaggerating difference'[11] by Phillips. We are also importing that problem to a context that does not quite fit. Separating women along lines of culture and identity as belonging to Islamic and secular portions of society, leads to a reification of identities which is more misguided in Turkey than it is in France. This reification not only leads to overlooking the common problems of women in Turkey, but it also precludes possible alliances and cleavages along class and gender lines. Hence both gendered dynamics and class dynamics remain in need of examination.

[11] One might argue that Joan W. Scott's analysis of the headscarf issue in France is also exaggerating the difference between the Islamic and French gender systems. Yet, that is another discussion out of the scope of this dissertation.

1.5. Contribution of the Dissertation

This dissertation pushes the headscarf debate in Turkey into new territory by questioning the culturalization of the headscarf, and by pointing out the significance of class and gender stratification in shaping the meanings and roles of the headscarf. This questioning revolves around the two major critical points elaborated above: First is the critique that an exclusive focus on culture, identity and recognition leads to the displacement of issues of social equality. The dissertation suggests analysis combining the cultural recognition problem with the problems of social inequality and gender stratification, particularly as they pertain to the position of lower middle class, non-university educated women in the private sector labor market. In previous research, the headscarf has been discussed overwhelmingly in a context defined by the headscarf ban in universities. Therefore the focus is on the predicaments of 'misrecognition' of identity in the state monitored public sphere, and the transformative search for recognition vis a vis the exclusionary practices of the state. The focus also remains on the middle class or at least upwardly mobile women with headscarves. However, how the headscarf plays out in the private sector labor market, among lower middle class, less educated women remains out of discussion. Exploring the context of employment in the *private* sector labor market makes it possible to demonstrate how the visibility of the headscarf is managed, to what extent and in which contexts exclusion and discrimination prevail outside the intervention of the state. This dissertation digs into that territory, and raises questions such as: In an athmosphere where public sector jobs have been legally closed to women with headscarves for years, are private sector jobs 'a safe haven' for women with

headscarves? In what ways do they negotiate their status in the labor market, and how does the headscarf figure in those negotiations? When the problems are concentrated in the realm of how to earn a living, to what extent does recognition of identity cure those problems?

The second major critical point concerns the reification of group identity that comes along with the emphasis on the 'authenticity' of group identities, and the portrayals of cultural groups as sharply divided along systematic and immutable faultlines. It should be emphasized that, movements pursuing politics of difference ultimately aim to render that difference 'unmarked'. Because 'marks' stem from the gap between hegemonic norms in the society and individuals who carry that certain difference in their bodies, ethnic identities, clothes, etc. Yet, the very gist of the criticism against politics of difference that invests itself in the accentuation of cultural identity is that, it works against the objective of 'unmarking' difference. Instead, the difference is being essentialized and reified by the attitude of constantly underlining difference and authenticity.

The dissertation looks into the ways in which lower middle class women formulate the meanings of the headscarf in their lives, and how they relate to the discourses that interpret the connotations of the headscarf in terms of cultural difference and identity. The findings complicate the established understanding that the headscarf of young, urban women necessarily connotes an ineluctable belonging in terms of a reified religious identity and cultural difference. In line with the findings, the dissertation argues that among lower middle class working women, the meanings given to the practice of covering tend to be fluid, dynamic and contingent on patriarchal bargains and negotiations for higher status jobs. One

salient theme brought up by the respondents, is the desire to be *unmarked* in their operations in the labor market. This theme surfaces as frustration about exclusion from employment in certain portions of the market. Yet, there are also various moments in which the same interviewees capitalize on the connotations of the headscarf as a means of accomodation to other portions of the labor market. The role of the headscarf as a 'mark' that connotes cultural difference does not only lead to segregation of women with headscarves in certain working settings. It also prevents the envisioning of alliances or collectivities other than those stemming from cultural belonging[12]. The headscarf becomes a keyword with implications of different gender ideologies, different lifestyles, and a different relation to the labor market. This dissertation aims to understand, from the women's perspective, how they relate to the discourse of cultural difference, and how they deal with this 'group identity' in the context of the labor market. It helps to flesh out how the headscarf and the discourse of 'difference' plays out with regard to patriarchal relations as well as gendered processes of exclusion and exploitation in the labor market. It also helps to understand the role of the headscarf in working women's negotiations with these structures of exclusion, inclusion, discrimination.

1.6. Organization of the Chapters

In Chapter 2, 'Women, Islam, headscarves, and the politics of difference in Turkey: A critical review', I critically review the major patterns observed in the

[12] We already know, from various studies exploring women's relation to the labor market in Turkey that, it is most uncommon to find a discourse based on class collectivity among woman workers (White, 1994; Özyeğin, 2004; Bora, 2005). A recent study on religious male workers in Konya (Durak, 2011) also demonstrates how discourse of religious identity displaces class solidarity.

scholarly discussion on the headscarf within the context of the literature on women and Islam. The objective is not only to give a review of the main theoretical perspectives and questions employed, but also to point out silences and precluded questions in the literature.

Chapter 3 delineates in detail the 'story of the field'. The chapter also discusses methodological concerns of the dissertation, and how they are related to the theoretical concerns. This chapter figures as an investigation of the main problems and questions embedded in the process of qualitative research, and a discussion of the story of the fieldwork in conversation with those questions.

Chapter 4, 'Situating the respondents' is an attempt to provide a close view of the respondents of the research. In order to do that, I delineate the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. Moreover, this chapter also looks into the different retail settings in which the respondents are employed with special sensitivity to the physical working conditions, social texture and social relations that shape the experiences of the respondents in working life.

Chapter 5, 'Demarcation lines in retail employment', focuses on the patterns of exclusion and inclusion experienced by women with headscarves in the retail labor market. Here I suggest that the choices related to employing or not employing women with headscarves in this labor market tap into different discourses contingent upon the kinds of images that the retail settings aim to convey, and the extent to which those images encompass variances in terms of not only cultural and religious identities but also tangible signs of class background, ethnic identity, etc. Second, I point out that the exclusion of the headscarf from certain portions of this private sector labor market is being normalized and

naturalized by formulating the employment process as an exclusively 'private', apolitical, managerial process. Third, the chapter underlines that the headscarf, combined with a lower middle class identity and a lack of university education, gets to be categorized as 'cheaper labor', even among cheap labor.

In Chapter 6, 'Distancing from the essentialized meanings of the headscarf: The desire to be unmarked', I delineate the web of assumptions and expectations in which women wearing the headscarf find themselves in, such as the expectation that they should prove their piety, and display a coherent identity marked by religious difference. Based on the findings of the research, I argue that within the context of a precarious labor market, lower middle class, non-university educated women with headscarves find themselves constrained by these expectations. Instead of formulating the headscarf as an immutable and irreversible choice deeply rooted in their identity, their narratives reveal intricate negotiations contingent upon patriarchal bargains and prospects of higher status jobs that retain the option of uncovering. I argue that these research findings raise significant questions about portrayals of cultural polarization along the lines of Islamic vs. secular in Turkey.

CHAPTER2

WOMEN, ISLAM, HEADSCARVES AND THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE IN TURKEY: A CRITICAL REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter investigates the main threads that weave patterns of scholarly discussion on the headscarf issue in Turkey especially in the post - 1990 period, and analyses those patterns in two dimensions: (1) Which theoretical discussions they address, (2) What kind of a paradigmatic identity they establish for women with headscarves. For this purpose the main arguments and theoretical perspectives informing the patterns are highlighted, as well as the silences and precluded questions.

The discussion on women and Islam in Turkey took a new turn in the 1990s, in the course of the increasing visibility of Islamist politics[13], and due to the rising popularity of the headscarf discussion. As opposed to the inclinations to dismiss Islam as a residual influence that is supposed to wither away in the course of modernization, the increasing acknowledgement of the influence of Islam in

[13] For different explanations to the rise of Islamist politics, see Öniş (1997), Ayata (1993), Gülalp (1999), Mardin (1989), Keyman (1995). For a discussion on these different explanations, see Yeşim Arat (2005).

providing a coherent social 'ethos' in Turkish society (Mardin, 1986), moved religion to a more central position in social science research in Turkey. This inspired a new academic sensitivity to the potential of Islamic culture in terms of producing new discourses and ways of life in interaction with modernity.

This academic sensitivity, along with the rising interest in the increasing visibility of young, urban, educated women with headscarves in urban public spaces, inspired a new line of research orientation regarding women who displayed an Islamic identity in the 1990s. This orientation was invested in countering the views that denounce the headscarf as either the 'evidence' of Islamist political manipulation, sign of false consciousness or patriarchal oppression[14]. Against these arguments, the headscarf increasingly started to be taken as a declaration of authentic identity challenging the difference – blind, homogeneous and exclusionary public sphere as well as the hegemony of Westernization on lifestyles on the one hand, and the traditional docile Muslim woman image on the other hand. Indeed, the exclusion of the headscarf from universities and the struggle of young, urban, educated women with headscarves against this exclusion have been substantially influential in defining the social and political context of this scholarly orientation. The image of the student with the headscarf struggling against exclusion to protect her right to modern education became the paradigmatic case pointing out the exclusionary, homogenizing aspects of the state monitored public sphere. This case was especially fruitful for a

[14] For an example of this line of arguments, see Necla Arat (1997), *Susmayan Yazılar*. İstanbul: Bilgi. As a Kemalist feminist, Necla Arat associates the headscarf with backwardness, submissiveness, and patriarchal oppression. Also see Keskin-Kozat (2003) for a brilliant mapping of how different approaches to the headscarf act as faultlines among different kinds of feminisms in Turkey.

number of reasons: It laid bare the shortcomings of imagining a uniform, homogeneous 'citizen'. It exhibited the ways in which a visible assertion of Islamic difference and identity carried the potential to democratize the homogenizing public sphere in such a way to address and embrace 'differences'. Women with headscarves who were actively engaged in a democratizing political struggle, also invoked a discussion on the transformation of gender relations among the Islamic population, with special emphasis on how this active religious woman figure challenged the widespread portrayal of women with headscarves as oppressed docile wives and mothers without agency. The tendency was to locate the headscarf within broader debates of alternative and hybrid forms of modernity challenging the modern/traditional dichotomy, as well as the discussions on the democratizing potential of politics of difference.

The contours of the academic discussion on the headscarf issue mentioned above have been endorsed by many major studies in the post-1990 period. In these studies, it is possible to observe a remarkably strong emphasis on Islamist politics of difference and the emancipatory potential of this politics of difference for women who would define themselves as religious Muslims. The headscarf has been located in an almost central position within this emphasis on the politics of difference. It has been loaded with heavy connotations of resistance against the grain of the homogeneous and exclusionary secular public sphere. It has also been attributed an emancipatory role in the lives of women who wear it, for locating them at the center of political activism, and providing them with the opportunity to enter the public sphere without compromising respectability (Göle, 1993). Even though the social and political context which defines women's experiences of

wearing the headscarf has changed significantly since the 1990s, the main themes and the underlying theoretical presumptions that have shaped the academic discussion since the 1990s, have been remarkably resilient.

This chapter critically investigates the common themes and threads in the post-1990s research which took the headscarf as a central locus of analysis. The threads investigated in this chapter have been highlighted on the basis of their resilient impact in terms of shaping the discussion of women, Islam and the headscarf. I aim to point out, first, the main theoretical orientations in which these themes and threads tap into, and second, the discursive productions of a paradigmatic identity for women with headscarves. I also aim to exhibit the shortcomings of this paradigmatic identity in terms of accounting for the variegating, transforming, contradicting meanings of the headscarf.

The chapter is organized as follows: First, I delineate the discrepancies between the findings of my research and the common patterns of arguments underlying various studies focusing on women and Islam in Turkey since the 1990s. Then I look into the reasons of these discrepancies. I proceed by suggesting four main themes that have been influential in shaping the patterns of the literature investigated, and critically investigate those themes. Last, I discuss these themes with reference to my research.

2.2. Gaps Between the Literature and the Research

While conducting qualitative research on the roles and meanings of the headscarf for lower middle class, non-university educated women in their working lives in the retail sales work I was struck by a significant gap between what I saw

in the field and in the literature. I had read through post-1990 scholarly studies dealing with religious Muslim women's experiences related to Islamism as a political movement, as well as their experiences in establishing an Islamic daily life in Turkey. I observed that the literature approaches the role of headscarves in these women's lives through certain conceptual frameworks; depicting the practice of covering either as democratic and unapologetic assertion of Islamic identity embedded in a modern discourse of identity politics, *or* as a modernizing practice that marks the transformation of Islamic identity from collective to individualized patterns which especially unfolds as consumerism and reconciliation with modern consumption habits. Indeed, there is a difference between focusing on 'collective identity' and on transformations towards individualized identities through consumption. However, what binds these two strands together is the focus on the formation of a modern Islamic identity, culture and lifestyle that unfolds in the storylines of women with headscarves. In other words, the literature is invested in challenging modernist dichotomizations that neatly categorize 'Islamic and traditional' vs. 'modern and secular', exploring the possibilities of alternative modernities or hybridizations. However, looking at the headscarf issue through the framework of 'culture and identity' falls short of embracing the experiences of urban saleswomen with headscarves who participated in this research. The research data collected for this dissertation was permeated with variegating, continuously shifting experiences, negotiations and struggles related to the headscarf, which rise above discussions of 'modern, secular' and 'Islamic, traditional'.

The women with headscarves in the literature are mostly engaged in a language of resistance and transformation, both at the political and individual levels. As young, urban, 'conscious Muslim'[15] women, they are resisting the exclusionary aspects of the secular public sphere and claiming to transform it. They assert the value of the religious difference they display by engaging in a politics of difference. They also resist the patriarchal or traditional interpretations of Islam and claim to transform the 'traditional, docile Muslim woman' image towards a socially active, conscious Muslim woman. For example, Nilüfer Göle (1997b: 87) argues that,

> Islamic female attire…. includes the convention of veiling. But this sort of veiling has little in common with traditional ways of covering the body. It has even less to do with the image of a Muslim woman as docile, devoted to her family and to her traditional roles of mother and spouse.

The meaning of the headscarf for the 'conscious Muslim' woman is frozen at the moment of resistances, either against the homogeneous public sphere or against traditional roles attributed to Muslim women. On the other hand, the studies focusing on the transforming consumption patterns among women with headscarves, draws on an exclusively middle class image, and highlights the refined taste of these urban middle class women with headscarves. Here, the locus

[15] Ayşe Saktanber (2002) argues that what differentiates a 'conscious Muslim' is the determination to lead a life in accordance with Islamic precepts, instead of only following the five pillars of Islam. Some of the interviewees of my on research referred to the concept of 'conscious Muslim' to define themselves. Their definition underlined a distance from 'traditional' religiosity. For instance, one interviewee argued that her headscarved mother, who uncovers her head in wedding ceremonies, is a traditional Muslim, whereas she, asa conscious Muslim, would not uncover during and kind of ceremony. Jenny White (2005) argues that the Islamists create a distinction between 'conscious' religiosity and unconscious adherence to tradition in order to deal with the paradox inherent to the 'new Islamic woman' image. Accordingly, the 'new Islamic woman' is a political agent resisting the status quo, while the gender ideology supporting the principle that a woman's place is in the home, is attributed to 'traditional Muslim women'.

of resistance shifts towards a Bourdieun struggle in the realms of consumption and taste. Accordingly, the middle class consumers of luxurious *tesettür* fashion are challenging the Westernized, secular women's monopoly on 'being middle class' and tasteful.

In the paragraph above, I described two images of 'women with headscarves' that I very frequently encountered during my explorations in the academic literature on women and Islam in Turkey. On the other hand, the urban saleswomen with headscarves that I met during the fieldwork in five different cities of Turkey, namely İstanbul, Ankara, Gaziantep, Denizli, and Kayseri painted quite a different picture. As I will elaborate in detail in the chapters where I lay out the findings of my research, the women I encountered, were more invested in accomodations than in resistances[16] through the use of the headscarf. By accomodations, I refer not only to their accomodation to the demands and sensitivities of their families, but also the accomodation to the patriarchal relations in their working settings. Patriarchy, and the accomodation to the surrounding patriarchal web of relations was much more salient to the experiences related to wearing the headscarf than the literature suggests. Secondly, rather than engaging in a politics of difference and identity, "sharpening their identity by labeling themselves Islamists" (Göle, 1997: 89), the much more visible motivation was to

[16] For a study that employs the concepts of accomodation and resistance as central to analyses regarding religious Muslim women in Cairo, Epypt, see MacLeod (1991). The main finding of the study is that, lower middle class working women in Cairo display an ambivalent attitude of both "protest" and "accomodation" through veiling. On the one hand, in the face of rapid socioeconomic change, they respond to what they perceive as a loss of tradition and try to identify with the rising Islamist culture. On the other hand, the accomodation dimension consists of women's acceptance of and accomodation to appropriate female behaviour, with the concern to be respected by men in their new roles as working women.

converge to a 'norm' of womanhood, that was defined by codes of modesty and conforming to the clothing norms in their surroundings. This motivation to 'converge' and 'blend in' includes negotiating different degrees of covering, as well as uncovering, depending on the social conventions in the working settings and the status of the job. Most importantly, the roles and meanings that the headscarf takes seemed to be much more dynamic, contingent and fluid than suggested by the literature.

2.3. Explanations of the Gap

Why is there such a discrepancy between the theoretical frameworks employed in the literature and the fieldwork conducted for this dissertation? First of all, as I have already elaborated in Chapter 1, this research focuses on lower – middle class women most of whom did not go through university education, whereas the research universe of most previous scholarly studies consists of university educated, middle class or at least upwardly mobile women. Focusing on educated, middle class women leads to highlighting the struggle to construct an Islamic middle class, urban lifestyle that would challenge the monopoly of Westernization on the definition of 'urban, civilized lifestyle' and redefine the codes of being 'civilized'. This brings along the construction of an ideal typical 'woman with headscarf' in the image of a middle class, professional, educated woman, creating silences with regard to the different meanings that the headscarf takes in different class and status contexts.

The second explanation of the gap relates to the literature's focus on the headscarf ban that used to exist in realms monitored by institutions of the state, such as the university and public sector jobs, and the struggle against this ban[17]. As I have elaborated in Chapter 1, the subjects of headscarf research are mostly educated women who are or have been in a political struggle with regard to the headscarf ban in the university or in public sector jobs. Many studies relating to the headscarf are based on qualitative research focusing on university students, professional university graduate women (Göle, 1993; Özdalga, 1998; 1997; 2006; İlyasoğlu, 1994, 1998; Atasoy, 2009; Pak, 2006; O'Neil, 2008; Kejanlıoğlu and Taş 2009; Cindoğlu, 2010; Jelen, 2011); or Islamist women engaged in political activism (Arat, 2005; Aldıkaçtı Marshall, 2005; Özçetin, 2009). In other words, the focus of the headscarf research is on the exclusionary aspects of the state monitored realms in Turkey and the educated, politically active women who struggle against this social exclusion. Approaching the issue from this perspective leads to higlighting the 'collectivity' of women with headscarves based on exclusion and struggle. This dissertation, on the other hand, looks into the predicaments of women with headscarves in private sector retail jobs, which

[17] The headscarf ban concerning university students is no longer implemented since 2010. This development came following JDP (Justice and Development Party) government's proposal for a constitutional amendment in 2008, that would abolish the ban for university students. The JDP was taken to the Constitutional Court and found guilty for undermining the constitutional principle of secularism. Yet, The Higher Education Council (YÖK) declared that enjoying university education with a headscarf should be considered as a right to education. The headscarf ban in public sector jobs was abolished in September 2013, hence women with headscarves can be employed in public office as of this date. The police organization, judiciary and the Turkish Armed Forces have been kept out of this amendment, in other words women with headscarves can still not be employed as policewomen, army officers, judges or public prosecutors.

remain out of the framework of state monitoring and the headscarf ban[18]. While exploring a realm that is not monitored directly by the state, we gain access to different parts of the picture whereby women with headscarves are influenced not only by lack of formal recognition in the public sphere but also by continuously changing images and perceptions in the job market which categorize women with headscarves as a specific type of labor force.

The third possible explanation of the gap is about the historical context. The theoretical frameworks very frequently employed in the literature have been established in response to the social and political context of the 1990s. Actually, this was the decade when some pioneering and influential scholarly contributions have been made, including books such as *Modern Mahrem* (The Forbidden Modern) by Göle (1993), *Örtülü Kimlik* (Veiled Identity) by İlyasoğlu (1994), and *The Veiling Issue, Official Secularism and Popular Islam in Turkey* by Özdalga (1997) among others. These contributions have been so influential that even many studies written much later than the 1990s remained within the theoretical frameworks established in these pioneering works. What defined the experiences of women with headscarves in the 1990s was a harsh political struggle to gain recognition to the headscarf in state monitored public sphere, an equally harsh social clash of secularist and Islamic symbols, and the February 28 process whereby the Turkish Armed Forces explicitly targeted not only political Islam but also women who struggle to exist in the public sphere with headscarves. Yet,

[18] Cindoğlu (2010) points out the "spillover effect" of the headscarf ban and argues that private sector employment is also influenced by the ban in public sector jobs. Yet, her focus is on headscarved women with professional occupations, such as lawyers, pharmacists, journalists, who frequently need to interact with public institutions. The "spillover effect" usually stems from these interactions, whereas saleswomen do not need to be in interaction with public institutions.

Turkey has witnessed drastic social and political transformations since the 1990s, which deeply transformed not only the Islamist movement but also the Islamic political discourse and the power balance in the political system. It would be out of the scope of this study to engage in a fully fledged account of this transformation, yet it is necessary to give a brief assessment of the changes in the social and political context in order to capture more clearly the transformation related to the headscarf issue from the context of the 1990s to the 2010s.

The 1980s and the 1990s witnessed profound transformations in Turkey. Economic liberalization and the advent towards integration with the world economy, as well as the vacuum of the left which was crashed in the 1980 coup d'état, gave way to a rise of a new language of political claimsmaking. This new language tended to articulate demands on basis of identity politics (Ayata, 1997). Islamist movement which was also at least partially endorsed by the state following the coup d'état (Tuğal, 2007), proliferated in such a political climate. While the influence of religion increased in the society, this influence was matched with increasing votes for political Islam[19]. In the 1994 local elections the Islamist Welfare Party gained victory in large cities including Istanbul. In the following general elections, the Welfare Party became the leading partner of a coalition government with 21.4 percent of the votes, and sealed its success.

[19] There are various explanations to the increasing influence of religion in social life, and the rising Islamist politics. Some scholars focus on the cultural dimension and search the roots of Islamic revival in the polarization and confrontation between Kemalist elite and religious "periphery" (Göle, 1993, 2000c), or the inability of Kemalism in establishing organic ties with the society (Mardin, 1989). The surge of Islamic sects (tarikats) and their success in providing solidarity networks to lower middle classes and rural to urban migrants against the backdrop of an opening market economy and urbanization, is also stressed (Ayata, 1997). The vacuum of the left after the coup in 1980 and the shortcomings of social democratic politics is also seen as a significant cause for the rise of Islamist politics (Tuğal, 2007).

While Islam was on the rise in social and political terms following the 1980s, the headscarf was on its way to becoming a heated issue of discussion which symbolized the polarization of political positions as 'Islamist' and 'secularist'. The headscarf ban, which was based on different regulations that emerged and evolved in time, came to focus in the immediate post-1980 coup d'etat period. In 1981, a regulation banning the headscarf in universities was enacted. This regulation was toned down by the Council of Higher Education in 1984, with the presentation of a new regulation which allows girls to cover their heads with a 'modern' headcover, termed as 'türban' (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu, 2008). This was followed by a government amendment to the Law of Council of Higher Education in 1988. However, upon the application of Kenan Evren, the leader of 1980 junta and the (then) President of Turkey, the Constitutional Court ruled in a 1989 decision that this regulation was contradictory to the principle of secularism safeguarded by the Constitution. In 1990, there was another attempt to abolish the headscarf ban, which was again rejected by the Constitutional Court. In 1997, the Welfare Party which was then a part of the ruling coalition, brought up the issue again, only to confront severe opposition from the military.

While the headscarf ban was an obstacle that prevented women with headscarves from education in universities, it also triggered a series of protests and demonstrations in the 1990s. These protests and demonstrations pulled young women with headscarves into political activism, engendering the advent of a group of intellectual, activist Muslim women (Göle, 1993; Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu, 2008). Arguments against the headscarf ban were articulated within a universal language of fundamental human rights and democracy. In the 1990s,

another factor that mobilized Islamist women into political activism was the organization of the Ladies' Commissions by the Welfare Party in 1990, which contributed substantially to the Party's electoral success (Arat, 2005). It is argued that the women who went through the Welfare Party Ladies' Commissions experience did not only challange the narrow understanding of secularism but also "reinterpreted (the illiberal aspects of their religion) to adjust to their liberal convictions" (Arat, 2005: 111), liberal convictions referring to respect for universal human rights and the individual. Similarly, Göle (1993) argues that the Islamist political activism of 1980s and 1990s contributed to the women's assertion of individual freedom in the long run.

The 1990s advent of political Islam was curbed by the 'February 28 Process'[20], which refers to the process defined by the military's effort to hamper Islamist politics[21] in 1997. The Welfare Party was closed down by the Constitutional Court in 1998. This was followed by the division of Islamist politics into two wings. The traditionalist wing established the Felicity Party (FP), whereas the reformist wing established the Justice and Development Party (JDP) in 2001. The February 28 Process lead to a moderation of political Islam, which could be observed both in FP and JDP. It has been argued that the JDP which came to power in 2002 general elections owed its electoral success to its inclination toward democratic conservatism rather than Islamism, and shying away from a radical discourse (Özbudun, 2006; Toprak, 2005).

[20] For a detailed analysis of the long term effects of February 28 process on Turkish politics, see Cizre and Çınar (2003).

[21] Özipek (2004) points out that the February 28 Process also hampered the advent of Islamic capital. He further argues that harming Islamic companies was a significant motivation which was hidden under a battle of symbols between the Islamists and secularists reinforced by the media.

Women with headscarves were probably the ones who mostly felt the oppresive impact of the February 28 Process. The ban on headscarves in the universities and in public institutions started to be implemented in a much more decisive and strict manner than before (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu, 2008; Özipek, 2008). The military underlined concern over the issue of veiling and pushed for a strict implementation of the headscarf ban in the universities. Women working in public sector jobs were targeted and investigated on the base of violating regulations, and many women with headscarves were either expelled or forced to resign from their jobs (Cindoğlu, 2010). Moreover, there were even cases when the employment of women in private companies was hampered through arbitrary processes. Many private companies, including Islamic ones, took advantage of headscarved women's loss of options in working life and employed them for much lower wages than they paid other employees (Özipek, 2008; Cindoğlu, 2010).

Cindoğlu and Zencirci (2008) argue that JDP's coming to power in 2002 did not substantially contribute to the democratic demands of headscarved women as JDP's cautious discourse lead the party to sideline the headscarf issue. Accordingly, the party shied away from demanding that women with headscarves enter the state sphere with headscarves. Cindoğlu and Zencirci (2008) further argue that the headscarf and the political claimsmaking in relation to the headscarf moved from being a modern form of agency in the 80s and 90s towards more conservative meanings, especially after 2002. This transformation was marked with the shifting of the discussion from headscarved women as political agents towards headscarved women as wives of political figures.

It is possible to argue that the post February 28 period was a period of frustration for educated, working women with headscarves who wanted to pursue their existence in the public sphere with their headscarves. Expelled from university, public employment, and even private employment in some cases, they were not only frustrated with formal bans but also with the Islamist men for abandoning them and sidelining the headscarf issue. This frustration is evident in published interviews with Islamist women (Çakır, 2000; Sever, 2006; Ongun, 2010), in Islamic literature (Çayır, 2008), and stories of injured identity by victims of the headscarf ban (Şişman, 1998). Hidayet Şefkatli Tuksal, an Islamist intellectual activist woman, summarizes the sources of the post-February 28 frustration in her interview with journalist Ruşen Çakır (2000: 37) as follows:

> Since the system has started to ignore and exclude women with headscarves, some men of our own conviction have also started to ignore us. Because women's headscarves started to harm the careers and visibility of men…. Actually this process has made women more mature: They understood the necessity of standing on their own feet. They all saw clearly that their husbands or religious bosses left them alone and excluded when the problem started to harm themselves"[22].

Journalist Ruşen Çakır, who has been specializing on the Islamist movement in Turkey for three decades, argues that the male Islamist elite stripped the headscarf movement from its aspects pertaining to the empowerment of women:

> Islamist men said they were in solidarity with university students with headscarves, but they very swiftly took control of the headscarf movement and turned it into a means of gaining political leverage. For this purpose, they stripped all aspects related to the gender dimension off of the headscarf movement….. Once the girls were made the objects of the issue

[22] The translation of the paragraph belongs to me.

rather than its subjects, the headscarf issue was a lost issue for women."[23] (Çakır, 2000: 77)

While frustration among Islamist women was mounting, the headscarf was at the same time gaining popularity and increasing its visibility in the everyday life (Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu, 2008). It is argued that taken with the loss of headscarf's "counter-hegemonic potential" (Cindoğlu and Zencirci, 2008), the popularization of the headscarf and its wide dissemination among daughters of Sunni Muslim conservative families is accompanied with a loss of its identity component (Çakır, 2000; Şişman, 2000). This process was also marked by the surge of the Islamic bourgeoisie and the concomitant popularity of '*tesettür* fashion' which fragmented the political and collective identity symbolized by the urban headscarf (Kılıçbay and Binark, 2002; Genel and Karaosmanoğlu, 2006; Sandıkçı and Ger 2007) to the point of decoupling *tesettür* from piety (Gökarıksel and Secor, 2009). Whereas in the 2000s the frustrations and the headscarf fatigue surfaced in mostly journalistic interviews with Islamist woman activists and intellectuals cited above, scholarship on headscarves developed a remarkable focus on Islamist consumption and the role of the 'veiling fashion' in defining a new alternative Islamic taste.

A showdown regarding the headscarf ban for university students, occured in February 2008 when the ruling JDP passed an amendment to the Constitution in alliance with the nationalist and conservative Nationalist Action Party (NAP). This amendment was cancelled by the Constitutional Court in June 2008. Therefore when the fieldwork for this dissertation started in 2009, students with

[23] The translation of the paragraph belongs to me.

headscarves could not enter university campuses; choosing either to take off their scarves or wear wigs or hats instead. In October 2010, after a dispute in İstanbul University, including a university student who was dismissed from class because of her headscarf, the president of the Council of Higher Education, Yusuf Ziya Özcan, declared that the Council is opposed to practices such as dismissing students from classes because of the headscarf. This declaration, which contradicts with the 2008 ruling of the Constitutional Court has created an ambiguous situation in terms of whether apply the ban or not (Ergin, 2010). Nevertheless, most of the universities started to accept students with headscarves. Finally, September 2013 witnessed the latest development in the headscarf issue: The ban on headscarves in public sector jobs was lifted, and women with headscarves can now be employed in public office, with the exception of judiciary, the army and the police force.

Whereas the lifting of the ban in university and public sector jobs is a favorable development for women with headscarves, relatively recent studies on the gender politics of the JDP criticize the government for enacting increasingly conservative policies regarding women, or emboldening conservative practices that end up in discrimination against women (Arat, 2010). It is argued that Turkey is experiencing a "democratic paradox" (Arat, 2010); that is, the expansion of religious freedoms opens the way to threats against gender equality (Arat, 2010; Fisher Onar and Müftüler-Baç, 2011). Arat (2010) points out the JDP's Social Security Amendment that arguably discourages women from joining the labor force, as well as the public displays of conservative mindset by Prime Minister Erdogan that foresees a restricted role for women as wives and mothers. Coşar

and Yeğenoğlu (2011) emphasize that the JDP government has gradually developed a hostile attitude against feminist demands which is demonstrated through various channels, such as declarations by important figures of the party.

In the pages above, I briefly laid out the background of the social and political transformation in Turkey since the 1990s for the purpose of understanding better the reasons of the gap between the literature on women, Islam and headscarves in Turkey and the findings of the research conducted for this dissertation. The theoretical frameworks established in the 1990s have opened up new terrains of discussion regarding the headscarf issue. Yet, these frameworks continued to be widely influential and resilient even though the social and political context defining the experiences related to wearing the headscarf have transformed drastically. This leads to gaps and silences in the literature in terms of responding to the current context.

Fisher Onar and Müftüler-Baç (2011) criticize the literature regarding religious women's experiences in Turkey for over using the "multiple modernities" framework[24] and for celebrating "modernist Islamist imaginaries" at the cost of "glossing over the privileging of patriarchal norms and practices in patriarchal contexts to the detriment of women" (p.380). I share this concern. Moreover, I think that the multiple –and/or alternative- modernities framework also freezes the meanings of the headscarf at a specific moment in the social and

[24] By "multiple modernities" framework, Fisher Onar and Müftüler-Baç refer to the approach that celebrates "localized responses to the common structural pressures of modernity (2011: 380). They define three problems pertaining to this approach: 1- essential "authentic codes" are reproduced, 2- nation is taken to be the primary case of social imaginary, overlooking the heterogeneity of societies, 3- "the tendency to celebrate alternative trajectories of modernity" (p.380) at the cost of overlooking patriarchal practices.

political history of Turkey. That is the moment when wearing the headscarf itself carried a political "counter-hegemonic potential" (Cindoğlu and Zencirci, 2008) and a strong identity-assertion component against the exclusionary practices in the public sphere supported by a staunchly secularist state. When the meanings and roles of the headscarf are frozen at that moment, we are left with questions about how those roles and meanings change in the process when the headscarf ban in universities and public sector jobs are lifted, when the class and status distinctions among women with headscarves have become much sharper, and at a time when the 'headscarf experience' can no longer be idealized in the storyline of educated, middle class women's struggles to get state recognition to an excluded identity.

The next section dwells on the main threads that can be traced in the post-1990 literature on women and Islam pertaining to their discussion on the headscarf.

2.4. Salient Threads in the Literature

This section is the product of a detailed critical reading of the post-1990 literature on women and Islam in Turkey. It highlights the main themes and threads that follow through the studies of women and Islam in Turkey. Those threads are categorized in four sections as follows: (1) Locating the headscarf within debates of the center-periphery distinction and their struggle for cultural hegemony in Turkey; (2) Approaching the headscarf as the loaded symbol of politics of Islamic difference; (3) Taking the practice of covering as a search for authentic identity; (4) Focusing on the consumption of *tesettür* fashion as the indicator of transforming Islamic woman identity. The threads highlighted in this

section are by no means mutually exclusive. To the contrary, they frequently intermesh and support one another. However, I have categorized them for the sake of a clearer analysis. I argue that the first thread concerning the dominance of the center-periphery framework in analysis of women, Islam and headscarves in the post-1990 literature acts as a subtext that weaves together and forms the rationale of the other three threads.

2.4.1. Center – Periphery Distinction, and Women with Headscarves as 'Counter-Elites'

The post-1990 literature on women and Islam in Turkey draws heavily on the 'center – periphery' approach which suggests that the division between Kemalist, secularist, privileged 'center' and the Islamic 'periphery' is the fundamental source of political, economic, social and cultural stratification in Turkey (Mardin, 1973). As Gülalp (2003b) argues, studies which build on the center-periphery distinction focus on a 'cultural struggle' between the Kemalist, republican secular 'center' and Islamic 'periphery' in order to analyse social and political conflicts in Turkey. This leads to an abundance of analyses to which lifestyles, cultural codes, and consumption patterns are central.

Studies which employ the perspective of center- periphery distinction address the upward social mobility of new Islamic middle class by conceptualizing it as a movement from the 'periphery' to the 'center'. Islamic intellectuals, Islamic middle class, and young, urban, educated women with headscarves are taken as crucial figures for they symbolize a movement from the 'periphery' to the 'center'. This movement towards the 'center' is framed as a

process of attaining higher social status through acquiring cultural capital[25] . Göle (2000c) conceptualizes the Islamic movement to the center as the formation of 'counter elites' and argues that the social status of counter elites is determined more by cultural capital than economic capital.

Many studies within the fold of the post-1990 literature which attempt to make sense of the increasing visibility of Islam in the public sphere in Turkey, underline the hierarchy between status groups as the determining form of social stratification (Göle, 1996, 1997a, 1997b, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2003; Bilici, 2000; Çınar, 2005, 2008; Navaro Yashin, 2002). Bilici (2000) contends that the public sphere in Turkey is defined by status groups instead of class stratification; dominated by bureaucrats and state officers instead of the bourgeoisie. Accordingly, it is argued that those who have the upper hand in this stratification maintain their cultural hegemony by excluding Islamists on the basis of cultural difference (Bilici, 2000; Göle, 2000a). Nilüfer Göle (2000b) draws an analogy between the social stratification in Turkey and the caste system in India in order to accentuate the fissure between what she calls "secular and Islamist fronts" (p.90-91). In her account, this fissure does not manifest itself in the form of horizontal

[25] Cultural capital, in the Bourdieuan sense, exists in three forms: In the embodied state, as dispositions of the mind and the body, in the form of cultural goods, that is, the objectified state, and in institutionalized state, such as educational qualifications. Social capital refers to connections, membership to groups, social relations. Economic capital refers to income, wealth, financial inheritances, monetary assets. Symbolic capital "is the form the different types of capital take once they are perceived and recognized as legitimate" (Skeggs, 1997: 8). See Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1989). Elliot B. Weininger (2005), in a detailed examination of Bourdieu's class analysis, underlines that even though Bourdieu draws a distinction between the economic and the symbolic, his class analysis involves the dimensions of economic and symbolic relations simultaneously. See Weininger (2005).

class stratification, but as a vertical stratification that cuts across classes, dividing the society as 'white Turks', which refers to the secular camp, and 'others'.

According to Alev Çınar (2008) the hegemony of the secular Republican elite is ossified by marking Islam "as the backward, the uncultured and uneducated, the rural, the traditional, the particular, the lower class" (p. 897). This point of view highlights a divide between Islamists and secularists and emphasizes their struggle in the realm of cultural 'marks'. While suggesting that secularism was invested in excluding those who maintain an Islamic lifestyle from becoming upper class, Çınar does not engage in a class based analysis of exclusion but rather refers to a symbolic exclusion in the public sphere that works through marking the symbols of Islam as 'belonging to the lower class, the unprivileged'. Navaro Yashin (2002) draws attention to the accumulation of capital among "businesses of the religious" (p.81) and opposes the dualistic configuration which positions 'secular/rich' as opposed to 'Islamist/poor'. She supports her point by delineating the changing consumption patterns of Islamists. Yet, she again puts the emphasis on the battleground of cultural symbols and lifestyles by highlighting a polarization between secularists and Islamists unfolding through consumption.

To put in a nutshell, through the lenses of the center-periphery distinction, the main locus of social stratification in Turkey is portrayed to be in the realm of status. If we take Fraser's (2003) definition, according to which status is "an order of intersubjective subordination derived from institutionalized patterns of cultural value that constitute some members of society as less than full partners in interaction" (p.49), cultural identities are crucial in the battle for a higher position

in the status hierarchy. Therefore, according to this portrayal of Turkish society, secular and Islamic portions of society are engaged in a battle to hegemonize the public sphere through rendering visible the signifiers of their cultures.

The extensive focus on the center periphery distinction and the cultural struggle between 'Islamic' and 'secular' leads to overlooking the class cleavages that cut across and complicate this culturally loaded dichotomy. The reader is left with questions about the differences, contradictions, tensions among upper and lower classes who define themselves with an Islamic identity, because the strong emphasis on cultural symbols figure as blankets that render class positions invisible. Considering, as Navaro Yashin (2002) contends, that there is a surge of wealth among Islamic business elite, then can we still argue that Islamic cultural codes and lifestyles still binds those who moved into upper classes and those who did not? Is culture only shaped by locating oneself in the Islamic / secular divide, or is it continuously reshaped and reconstructed in processes of social mobility?

The literature investigated here leaves in the dark how class based change fragments Islamic groups. What the literature rather focuses on is how the Islamic habitus is carried into the center and how it challenges the normalization of secular cultural codes as privileged, superior and 'unmarked'. This is the reason why the increasing visibility of educated, urban women with headscarves gains popularity in the research agenda. The headscarf in modern, urban public sphere is extensively analyzed as a challenge to the privileged position of secular, Western based cultural codes insofar as it challenges being categorized into the 'rural, uneducated, lower class'. It attracts significant scholarly attention as it also complicates the 'modern' vs. 'traditional and Islamic' dichotomy. It is possible to

observe three major strands that the post-1990 headscarf research takes to the end of demonstrating how the urban, educated women with headscarves challenge the hegemony of secular cultural codes in the public sphere. These strands are not mutually exclusive, but I categorize them according to which major lines of argumentation they highlight. First strand underscores a modern politics of difference and identity that urban, educated women with headscarves are argued to pursue. Second strand brings forth the argument that the 'conscious Muslim woman' identity connotes a rupture from, and resistance to traditional gender roles. Third strand focuses on the changing consumption patterns of women with headscarves and claims that the modern '*tesettür* fashion' contributes to carrying the Islamic habitus from the periphery to the center.

2.4.2. Headscarf as the Symbol of Politics of Islamic Difference

The previous section points out that the post-1990 social science research agenda on Islam in Turkey is invested in tracing the movement of Islamic cultural codes from the periphery to the center. Within this general tendency, educated, urban women with headscarves are attributed a central position in terms of challenging the privilege of secularist norms in the public sphere. One salient thread in the literature is based on the argument that women with headscarves are engaged in a modern politics of difference and identity. This thread frames the practice of wearing the headscarf as a subversive, unapologetic assertion of Islamic identity and locates it in proximity to the identity- based 'new social movements'. Through this point of view, women with headscarves carry

themselves into the 'center' by becoming political actors who search for recognition to their identity in the public sphere.

The line of argumentation that locates the headscarf within the discourse of politics of difference and identity acts upon the assumption that the act of wearing the headscarf inherently bears a critique against the way in which the 'woman question' has been handled and engineered by the Kemalist state in the course of the modernization project. Indeed, one of the defining aspects of the project of modernization in Turkey was to construct a homogeneous modern, urban, Westernized identity for women of the Republic (Kandiyoti, 1987; Z. Arat, 1994; Durakbaşa, 1998; Y. Arat, 1997). The public visibility of this 'modern woman' was crucial for endorsing the Westernized, secular public sphere (Göle, 1997a). This 'ideal woman citizen' image did not include women wearing headscarves, or women carrying any symbols of religiosity that would 'mark' the neutral 'secular citizen' image; it was based on the exclusion of religious difference (Çınar, 2005; 2008), as well as ethnic difference, class difference, and sexual difference. In terms of drawing the contours of a secular public sphere and displaying the success of the project of modernization and Westernization, women's clothing has been attributed special significance (Çınar, 2005).

The most frequently highlighted arguments in the post-1990 literature on women and Islam in Turkey are formed with reference to the above mentioned straitjacket of ideal woman citizen image. From this perspective, it is argued that the Islamic headscarf donned by young, urban, especially educated women connotes a challenge to the homogenizing and exclusionary aspects of the modern, secular public sphere (Göle, 1997a; Çayır, 2000; Suman, 2000)

designated to exclude "non-Westernized Muslim population" (Göle, 1997a: 65). Accordingly, what is sought for is the recognition of Islamic difference. The headscarf is portrayed as the subversive symbol that accentuates this difference.

It is possible to observe that the language of resistance attributed to women with headscarves draws on the theories of politics of difference, which mainly propose ways to extend recognition to the plurality of identities by transforming the 'difference blind' model of citizenship of Western liberal democracies (Young, 1990; Taylor, 1994). The identity politics pursued by post-1968 new social movements such as radical feminist movement, gay rights movement, is taken as the model through which identity and difference are asserted. Çayır (2000) argues that the politics of difference pursued by Islamists should be understood within the broader wave of the shift of social movements' emphasis from equality towards recognition of difference. Parallels are drawn between actors of new social movements, especially the feminist movement, and women wearing the headscarf (Göle, 1993; 1997a; Çayır, 2000; Suman, 2000). While Göle employs the term "the veiling movement" (1993: 83; 1997a: 73); Kentel (2008) argues that women with headscarves are engaged in a social movement defined by collective identity and resistance. The analogy builds on the 'difference' debate: Similar to the second wave feminists who refused to be assimilated to the 'universal' category of 'human being' through taking pride in their differences, it is argued women with headscarves resist assimilation to hegemonic norms of Westernization and modernity. Taking pride in the excluded and stigmatized headscarf symbolizes this resistance through accentuating Islamic difference (Göle, 1997b; 2003; Çayır, 2000; İlyasoğlu, 1994, 1998).

The Islamic difference is formulated as a cultural difference that offers alternatives to the Western connotations of civilization and modernity (Göle, 1993; 2000a). It is argued that this cultural difference mostly culminates in the configuration of gender relations (Göle, 1993). Accordingly, as opposed to the Western based tendency to render transparent the private realm and promote the mixing of sexes in social life, Islamism offers segregation of the sexes and upholds the privacy of relations between men and women (Göle, 1993; 1997b; 2000c). The headscarf is argued to be the most accurate expression of this alternative configuration of gender relations. It is also argued that the headscarf symbolizes an alternative politics of the body, which aims to change the state designated boundaries of the public and the private, "marking upon the body the boundaries of the public and the private defined by Islam" (Çınar, 2005: 57).

There is a striking common aspect among studies that interpret the role of headscarf through the angle of politics of difference. These studies draw a sharp distinction between 'traditional headscarf' and 'new headscarf'. According to this distinction, traditional headscarf is the headscarf of a former generation of women who did not claim presence in the public sphere, who wore their headscarves as an extension of traditional social conventions and piety which they kept to the private realm. However, the 'new headscarf' is formulated as the headscarf donned by younger, urban, more educated women, who claim to transform the public sphere. For example, Çayır (2000) labels the traditional headscarf as 'pre-modern'; whereas he argues that the latter one belongs to the actors of a modern movement claiming to develop alternatives to Western understanding of modernity. Similarly, Kadıoğlu (1999: 102-103) employs the term 'turban' and contends that

it belongs to the younger generation of women who represent the political claims of Islamism. Göle (2003) argues that the 'new headscarf' draws a distinction between 'Muslim' and 'Islamist' identities: "One can be born Muslim, but one becomes an Islamist by personal choice and political engagement…. Such a transformation from Muslim to Islamist is the work of a collective countercultural movement" (Göle, 2003: 815)

Even though the 'politics of difference' framework bestows a democratizing and favorable role to the 'new headscarf', some Islamist intellectuals object to this framework. For example, Islamist sociologist Nazife Şişman contends that some liberal intellectuals prefer to 'give roles' to young women with headscarves in order to accentuate how different these women are from 'ignorant, rural women' (Şişman, 2009: 105-106). She also voices discontent over the attitudes of young women with headscarves who capitalize on the praises of liberal intellectuals and try to prove their difference from the former generation by showing how knowledgeable they are about Western lifestyle. She argues that framing the practice of wearing the headscarf as a modern identity claim reduces the meaning of the headscarf to an extra-religious, profane meaning that is to be analyzed in sociological terms only.

I would like to suggest that the politics of difference approach is to be criticized because it attributes an essentially resistant role to the headscarf. Actually, it is this potential of resistance which makes the headscarf a 'modern' phenomenon, and it is through this resistance that women with headscarves are argued to become a part of the global discourse of politics of difference. The literature locates the resistance of the headscarf within the wave of politics of

difference insofar as women with headscarves claim to democratize the public sphere by struggling to get recognition to their excluded identity. Here, it should be pointed out that the overarching attribution of 'resistance' obstructs the differences among women with headscarves, and renders invisible various negotiations revolving around the practice of wearing the headscarf. The category of 'new headscarf' establishes a certain ideal type of women with headscarves: A woman whose headscarf bears a loaded political critique; a woman who articulates this critique within a global language of politics of difference. Yet, while establishing this ideal typical image, the literature glosses over and marginalizes women whose experiences with the headscarf do not overlap with this storyline. The categorization of 'old' vs. 'new' headscarf also works toward erasing certain nuances and drawing clear pictures not hampered by the complexity of negotiations. The literature emphasizes the 'new' headscarf, the headscarf that is donned by young, urban, educated women for reasons of a modern assertion of religious identity. This categorization is based on its opposite: Women who are donning the headscarf because of family or community pressure. What kind of negotiations those women go through, in what ways they carve out a space of existence, the fluid and ambivalent discursive positions they subscribe to, are left out of analysis. They are 'useful' insofar as they prove how sharply different the 'new' headscarf is. Yet, these clear categories (women who wear 'old' headscarf because of traditional motives vs. 'new' Muslim women who are engaged in acts of subversion and resistance) do not do justice to the complexity of the experiences of wearing the headscarf.

2.4.3. Headscarf, the Search for an Authentic Identity, Resistance

In addition to the emphasis on how the headscarf connotes the pursuit of politics of difference, another thread in the literature on women and Islam in Turkey underlines that wearing the headscarf is a milestone act in the search for an authentic identity in women's lives. It is possible to argue that within this literature, more often than not, the headscarf is viewed as a rupture from, rather than in continuity with, traditional gender roles and familial influences. This rupture is inherent to the search for an authentic individual identity based on resisting these traditional gender roles, as well as resisting the secular order.

Before going into the analysis of this emphasis on the search for authentic identity, an elaboration on the discussion of authenticity is in order. Charles Taylor (1994) describes authenticity as the search of the modern self for "an original way of being human" (p.30):

> There is a certain way of being human that is **my** way. I am called upon to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else's life. But this notion gives a new meaning to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life; I miss what being human is for **me**".

Appiah (1994) points out that the concept of authenticity suggests two possible meanings. According to the first understanding, there is "an authentic nugget of selfhood" (p.155) waiting to be discovered through struggling with the forces that constitute the social influences in one's life. An alternative understanding of authenticity suggests that, "a self is something that one creates, makes up, so that every life should be an art work" (Appiah, 1994: 155). Both understandings imply resistance. In Taylor's account, the modern search for authenticity is what makes 'recognition' a crucial issue: Authenticity implies a

unique way of 'being human' to every individual. The attempt to gain recognition to this 'unique way' becomes an issue in modern societies because of the possibility that it can fail (Taylor, 1994).[26] In other words, Taylor attributes great significance to the tense relationship between the individual's search for authenticity, which involves a certain amount of resistance, and her search for recognition.

The relation between authenticity and recognition sheds light on the discussion on women and Islam in Turkey. Saktanber's (2002) concept of "injury / pride dichotomy" helps us understand this relation in the context of religious Muslim women in Turkey. In Saktanber's account, injury and pride define the formation of a religious Muslim woman identity: On the one hand, there is the feeling of injury stemming from misrecognition by the society; that is, "having been constantly accused of being obscuranists who prevent society from its march towards progress" (Saktanber, 2002: 28). On the other hand, there is the pride of being a "non-secularized Muslim", "born out of the sense of being close to the essential" (p.28), which refers to the pride of authenticity against the grain of

[26] Appiah (1994) argues that there is a contradiction between Taylor's emphasis on authenticity and his account of politics of recognition. On the one hand, "authenticity" necessitates an opposition to conventional social influences. It implies either an essential "nugget of the self", or a monological formation of identity, that is, the "art work" model. Yet, it is impossible to overemphasize the significance that Taylor attributes to the dialogic formation of identity and the importance of social recognition for the healthy flourishing of identity His account of the politics of recognition highlights two points: First, the importance of social contact on the formation of identity; and second, the argument that as identity is formed in dialogue with others, misrecognition by others may inflict huge harm on a person *or* a group. Appiah puts the contradiction as follows: "The rhetoric of authenticity proposes not only that I have a way of being that is all my own, but that in developing it I must fight against the family, organized religion, society, the school, the state – all the forces of convention. This is wrong, however, not only because it is in dialogue with other people's understandings of who I am that I develop a conception of my identity (Taylor's point) but also because my identity is crucially constituted through concepts and practices made available to me by religion, society, school, and state, and mediated to varying degrees by the family" (Appiah, 1994: 154).

secularist impositions. The concept upholds that "non-secularized" Muslim woman identity is defined by the harms inflicted as a result of misrecognition and the search for authenticity.[27]

Whereas Saktanber coins the term of 'injury / pride dichotomy' for women who define themselves as non-secularized Muslim women, in various studies, a similar search for authenticity is attributed to women for their decisions to wear the headscarves. Göle (1993) suggests that the headscarf acts as a 'lever' in the search for identity which brings an inner transformation against traditional gender roles (p.128) such as the roles of docile mothers and spouses (Göle, 1997a) as well as against traditional interpretations of Islam. The headscarf as an indicator in the search for authenticity is particularly salient in Özdalga's studies (1997, 1998, 2006), who refers to veiling as a kind of renovation that opens up new possibilities in life for Islamist women (2006: 165). Özdalga's interviewees' narratives related to the decision to wear the headscarf are permeated with stories of injured identities due to the lack of social recognition and the concurrent search for empowerment and belonging. There is a strong emphasis on the role of the headscarf as a factor that helps women gain self confidence and independence.

The decision to wear the headscarf is very commonly framed as a decision that necessitates resistance against family. Yeşim Arat (2005), in her study on activist women of Refah Party Ladies' Commissions, explains that her interviewees who come from secular families have gone through a struggle with

[27] Yet, it should be noted that in Saktanber's study (2002), the search for authenticity among religious women is not portrayed as rupture from tradition or resistance against traditional gender roles. Saktanber takes women as "actors", yet this position rather stems from their primary role in inventing an Islamic way of life. According to the findings of her research, women are not in the position of "receivers" of the dictates of an Islamic way of life; to the contrary, they formulate the basis of Islamic way of life.

their families and started to cover during university years, as a part of their search for identity. Her interviewees coming from religious and conservative families, on the other hand, were engaged in a resistance against traditional gender roles through political activism. Aynur İlyasoğlu, in her study (1994) for which she conducted fieldwork with university graduate women with headscarves, maintains that her interviewees found the motivation to sharpen their identity within the social environment they joined in the university, rather than their intimate social circle. In İlyasoğlu's account, wearing the headscarf was the way in which they distinguished their Islamist identity from their intimate social circle. Göle agrees with İlyasoğlu in terms of defining the headscarf as a means of sharpening difference in "the quest for Islamic self" (1997 b). Moreover, she argues that the 'new headscarf' marks a transformation from 'Muslim' to 'Islamist'. What differentiates the two is that; "one can be born Muslim, but one becomes an Islamist by personal choice and political engagement." (Göle, 2003: 815)

To put in a nutshell, it is frequently argued that wearing the headscarf is a practice that helps women gain self confidence and an authentic identity in a rupture from the influences of traditional, oppressive gender roles[28]. This emphasis is a response to the headscarf skeptic[29] arguments which denounce the headscarf as a sign of patriarchal oppression or a result of Islamist political

[28] Alev Çınar (2005, 2008) opposes the view that the visibility of women with headscarves in the public sphere corresponds to emancipation or liberation: "The new veiling serves to conceal the female body from the male gaze, and in doing so, it also reconstitutes the body as that which is inherently and naturally an object of male desire" (Çınar, 2005: 77). Furthermore, she argues that the act of veiling is as much a part of a political project as unveiling is. In a more recent study, she argues that "the headscarf has served to give Islam a presence in the public sphere, but at the same time it confines headscarf-wearing women to that specific symbolic presence" (Çınar, 2008: 907).
[29] I borrow the concept of 'headscarf skeptic' from Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu (2008).

manipulation of women into 'false consciousness'. The main difference between the headscarf skeptic point of view and the 'authentic identity' point of view is embedded in the structure vs. agency discussion. The headscarf skeptic point of view almost totally refuses to acknowledge any agency involved in the decision to don the headscarf. Accordingly, the headscarf exclusively connotes that the agency of the woman wearing it has been erased: It can either be the result of pure patriarchal oppression or Islamist political manipulation. Headscarf skeptic discourse in Turkey frequently suggests a distinction between the 'grandmothers' headscarf', which is argued to be the sign of piety restricted to the private realm, and the 'new', modern, urban headscarf. What differentiates the grandmothers' headscarf is its lack of challenge to secularism. 'Grandmothers' is a metaphor of the women who do not have a claim on public visibility, who live their religiosity in the private realm without carrying a demand of displaying religious signs in the public sphere. 'Grandmothers' are not urbanized or modernized, they are argued to wear the headscarf as an organic part of their rural lifestyles and their 'sincere piety'. The expectation is that, if those grandmothers had been urbanized, or if they had had the chance to get a modern education, they would have already taken it off. The 'new' headscarf, to the contrary, is permeated with a challenge to the secular and modern public sphere. Unlike the 'grandmothers', the young, urban women with headscarves are those who have access to modern education, to the possibilities of urban life. Yet, let alone take off the headscarf, they are 'insisting' on it, which, according to this point of view, necessarily shows that the agency of these women has been erased by political or patriarchal 'brainwashing', in other words, that they have lost their agency through false consciousness.

The line of argumentation that frames the headscarf as a 'modern search for identity' is a strong reaction to this false consciousness thesis. The categorization of new vs. old headscarf finds itself a major place in this discourse, but due to sharply contrasting reasons. The 'new', urban, modern headscarf is portrayed as an act of resistance, this time not motivated by false consciousness, but, to the contrary by the 'free will' of the individual. Therefore, in scholarly studies written within this framework, authors emphasize that the young, urban, educated women wearing the headscarf are resisting not only the homogenizing aspects of the secular public sphere, but also patriarchal pressures. Whereas the headscarf skeptic framework totally subscribes to structural factors created by Islamism and patriarchy in its regard of the headscarf, the politics of difference framework resorts to an opposite pole and overemphasizes free will, free choice, and resistance. It is essential to point out that the politics of difference framework subscribes to a view of agency that is stripped from the social, cultural and economic influences that shape it. The negotiations revolving around the headscarf which involve class, status, patriarchal controls, position in the labor market; in other words structural factors that women take into account while using their agency, are rendered invisible.

Abu-Lughod (1990) points out that the tendency to put too much emphasis on 'resistance' bears the risk of 'romanticizing' it (1990). In a rather self-critical fashion, she explains that she used to be too optimistic about resistance and "read all forms of resistance as signs of the ineffectiveness of systems of power and of the resilience and creativity of the human spirit in its refusal to be dominated" (Abu-Lughod, 1990: 42). As opposed to such romanticizing, she suggests

evaluating resistances within the context of the complex workings of power and "how people are caught up in them" (p.42). To put in other words, she opposes the search for 'resistance and resisters' at the expense of understanding power. In a rather Foucauldian way, she suggests looking into how power acts as a productive force in shaping the resistances. While problematizing the attitude of attributing excessive self-consciousness, even feminist consciousness, to every act that in some way may undermine traditional norms, she suggests that scholars be aware of alternative forms of power that actually influence that apparently 'resistant' act.

Saba Mahmood, in her much influential study *Politics of Piety* (2005) acknowledges the significance of Abu Lughod's critique, but takes it further in order to problematize "the universality of desire to be free from relations of subordination, and for women, from structures of male domination" (p.10). Mahmood's central objective is, first, to establish that 'agency' is the product of operations of power rather than just resistance to relations of domination. She wants to delineate the uneasiness of the link between 'self realization' and 'autonomous will', and argues that this link has its basis in an atomistic regard of the self rather than a conception of the self as relational; as well as the assumption of a rational, transcendental subject. Up to this point in her argument, she declares that she is "indebted to poststructuralist critique" (p.14). Yet she goes on to challenge poststructuralist feminism on the grounds that poststructualist feminist theory frames agency within the binary model of resistance vs. subordination. Instead, she suggests "to detach the notion of agency from the goals of progressive politics" (p.14). Her second central objective, then, is to include modes of existence that do not fit onto the map of 'resistance vs. submission'

binary, and to enact a new definition of agency which embraces the multiple ways in which one not only resists but also inhabits norms.

> If we accept the notion that all forms of desire are discursively organized, then it is important the practical and conceptual conditions under which different forms of desire emerge, **including desire for submission to recognized authority.** We cannot treat as natural and imitable only those desires that ensure the emergence of feminist politics". (Mahmood, 2005: 15, emphasis mine)

I agree with Abu-Lughod's warning against romanticizing resistance and stretching conceptual tools in order to flesh out the dimension of resistance in every act at the cost of overlooking the encroachments of power. Yet, Mahmood's questioning of 'resistance vs. subordination' binary leaves me in an ambivalent position. On the one hand, I agree that lining up desires in a hierarchy on an imaginary ladder of freedom or progress is a misleading approach that leaves out or dismisses desires not attached to resistance. Yet Mahmood's argument, to my reading, bears the risk of dismissing all kinds of search for emancipation as products of the prescriptive tendencies of Western-oriented feminism. In an effort to 'embrace desire for submission to recognized authority', how do we keep up the critical questioning of the configurations of power which push people to desire submission to recognized authority?

Mahmood (2005) supports her arguments with the ethnographic study she conducted among women of the 'mosque movement' in Cairo, Egypt. The sensibility that is central to the mosque movement is the discontent with the marginalization of an Islamic way of life in Egypt. Mahmood focuses on how these women discipline themselves in such a way as to submit themselves to 'external authority', which is, in this case, religious belief and conviction.

Mahmood's fieldwork has been criticized for it is limited to exploring women's lives only within and in relation to the mosque movement. The fact that Mahmood did not extend her research to the everyday lives of her interviewees leads to silences about how the discourse of coherent moral selves cultivated in submission to religious authority play out in other social fields (Bangstad, 2010). The reader is left wondering about how the interviewees would respond to forms of external authority other than religion, such as patriarchal family structures, forms of authority related to the class structure, or social expectations that guide a woman towards a certain web of desires.

This discussion is important to establish an informed critique of the tendency of searching for acts of resistance by religious women in woman and Islam studies in Turkey. The point of view that sees the 'new headscarf' as indicative of using free will against secularist impositions, hardly involves a thorough discussion of what agency is, and how it is subtly shaped through power embedded in social relations. Referring to Abu Lughod's warning against romanticizing resistance, it is possible to argue that in the literature in Turkey, there is a tendency to romanticize the subversive potential of the headscarf against traditional gender roles and state patriarchy invested in Westernizing women. This leads to underestimating the influences of both sources of power on the formation of women's subjectivities. What the literature offers us, then, is a group of women who are abstract, atomized individuals free from social influences, who have "chosen a religious identity from a market of identities", as Alemdaroğlu (2011: 37) critically puts it.

Saba Mahmood, on the other hand, is very much invested in challenging the atomistic regard of the self, and in establishing that the self is relational. Yet, as she almost abandons the concept of resistance as a Western imposition in order to embrace the submissive agency that the religious women endorse, her project bears the risk of affirming the power to which individuals submit to. Another risk is undermining the will to contextualize and decipher the structural mechanisms through which submission is produced and resistance is curbed. Paradoxically, we end up with almost the same result: Whereas studies that take the subject as atomistic tend to naturalize the subject's potential of resistance, Mahmood almost naturalizes the subject's will to submit. In both cases, there arises the risk that patriarchal relations of power that surround women might go unexamined and uncriticized.

2.4.4. Focus on Consumption: *Tesettür* Fashion as the Indicator of Changing Islamic Woman Identity

The emphasis on center-periphery distinction, and the concomitant focus on battles of cultural capital between 'secular center' and 'Islamic periphery' analyzed as the first thread, leads to a special interest in the changing consumption patterns of Islamists. These changing consumption patterns figure large in the literature as a means by which the 'Islamic periphery' carries itself to the 'center'. This interest stems from the transformation of Islamism in the course of 1990s in the context of accumulation of wealth, rising Islamic bourgeoisie (Buğra, 2002; Demir, Acar and Toprak, 2004), globalization (Kösebalaban, 2005; Kuru, 2005), and the concurrent transformation of collective Islamist identity towards

individualized identities (Çayır, 2008). This special interest in changing consumption patterns surfaces in two kinds of analysis: First, consumption is a focus of analysis as the realm of symbolic struggle between Islamists and secularists. Secondly, the changing consumption patterns among Islamists are under scrutiny for they are taken to both influence and indicate the transformation of Islamism. In both kinds of analysis, the changing consumption of clothing items and flourishing personal styles among women with headscarves is a favorite theme.

The literature focusing on the changing patterns of consumption among Islamists is saturated with references to Bourdieu, in order to underline the struggle to gain symbolic power and maintain 'distinctions' through accumulating cultural and symbolic capital. In an attempt to explain why he studies Islamic consumption patterns, Bilici (2000)[30] states that consumption is the way of claiming cultural capital and recognition in capitalist societies, therefore the new Islamic consumption patterns indicate a claim to the recognition of identity[31]. Through this argument, he establishes a connection between consumption and politics of identity. In this regard, consumption becomes a way through which Islamic identity and cultural difference is asserted.

Navaro Yashin's (2002) study is among the foremost examples of studies that focus on consumption as a realm of symbolic struggle. In an analysis of

[30] In this study, Bilici (2000) looks into the new holiday consumption patterns of Islamists. He especially studies the case of Caprice Hotel, the luxury holiday resort that pioneered the conservative holiday trend.

[31] "Recognition" here is used in line with Charles Taylor's (1994) conceptualization, according to which, recognition by society is crucial for the formation of identity. As identity is formed in dialogue with others, misrecognition by others may inflict huge harm on a person or a group.

consumption sites, she argues that politics of identity unfolds through consumption in Turkey making shopping settings a battleground between Islamists and secularists:

> …Distinction, quality and morality in goods were now defined around the terms of politics of identity. Secularists were ultimately 'different' from Islamists because they consumed different things. Habits of consumption became central markers of internal cultural difference in Turkey". (Navaro Yashin, 2002: 85).

She gives examples from shopping settings of late 1990s, explaining how shopping malls became secularist 'fronts' as opposed to the flourishing luxurious Islamic shopping settings such as Tekbir. The headscarf and the changing *tesettür* fashion are at the center of her study, because her main argument concerns the commodification of secularist and Islamic symbols and the new Islamic 'taste' that unsettles the poor/ Islamic vs. upper class/secularist binary.

Whereas Bilici and Navaro Yashin take consumption as an arena where the Islamic/ secular divide becomes sharper, hence as a new battleground where politics of difference unfold, another recurrent argument portrays *tesettür* fashion as a means of transforming 'religious woman identity' (Kılıçbay and Binark, 2002; Genel and Karaosmanoğlu, 2006; Sandıkçı and Ger 2001, 2007, 2010; Gökarıksel and Secor, 2009; 2010). Gökarıksel and Secor (2009, 2010) explore the transformation of the headscarf from fixed meanings to contingencies through focusing on the consumption of *tesettür* fashion. They draw attention to the tension between piety and fashion, stressing that *tesettür* fashion actually changes the meaning of the practice of veiling (2010) almost to the point of decoupling *tesettür* from piety (2009).

While Gökarıksel and Secor limit their arguments to how the meaning of the headscarf changes through *tesettür* fashion, other studies focusing on consumption take the *tesettür* fashion to connote a wider and deeper transformation. Accordingly, the consumption of a wide range of *tesettür* products leads to heterogeneity and fragmentation as opposed to collective political and religious identities (Kılıçbay and Binark, 2002; Genel and Karaosmanoğlu, 2006; Sandıkçı and Ger, 2007). *Tesettür* fashion enables women with headscarves to differentiate themselves from 'other' headscarf wearers through 'taste' in the Bourdieuan sense. In other words, while "religiosity equalizes and homogenizes the Islamic identity, taste classifies it" (Sandıkçı and Ger, 2007: 201). These studies commonly focus on women of rising Muslim bourgeoisie who have the means to distance themselves from 'other' women with headscarves, 'other' referring to 'traditional Muslim women' or women who identify themselves with militant Islamism (Kılıçbay and Binark, 2002).

These studies indeed shed light on the transformation and heterogenization of a formerly more homogeneous collective identity. Yet, an extensive focus on consumption as *the* realm that signifies transformation, heterogeneization and fragmentation of Islamic woman identity bears two risks. First, this research agenda is exclusively interested in the middle and upper middle class women with headscarves since the ability to consume more luxurious '*tesettür* fashion' is portrayed as the locus of agency through which Islamic woman identity finds new and more fragmented ways of expression. In this regard, the fluid and changing meanings of covering among lower class women remain unexplored. More importantly, lower class women are left in the realm of 'traditional Muslim

women' due to their lack of means to follow a more 'refined taste' of clothing. Second, the focus on consumption also constrains the roots of transformation in the middle class Islamic woman identity within the limits of consumption and reduces women's lives to consumption. What else has transformed in the lives of these women except the fact that they could consume fashionable *tesettür* clothing and display personal individual styles? One possible antidote to this limitation is to look into how women with headscarves relate to the labor market in order to understand 'transformation'. For example, it is argued that in the 1990s, while Islamist men developed careers in companies of rising Islamic capital, women with headscarves found themselves stuck at home and depressed due to both expected traditional gender roles and exclusion from the labor market (Aktaş, 2001; Çayır, 2008). As Çayır (2008) states, "Not being able to work has been difficult for university educated women with headscarves. Because when they stayed at home, they resembled the 'traditional woman' from whom they wanted to differentiate themselves" (p.141). Apparently, consumption of *tesettür* fashion was not a satisfactory way for the educated woman to 'distance' herself from traditional Muslim housewife identity. The exclusion was not only due to the headscarf ban in public sector jobs, but also exclusion from private sector jobs. The companies of Islamic capital did not embrace women with headscarves, either. This exclusion lead to an emerging gap between Islamist men and women, fragmenting the Islamist collectivity of the 1980s (Çayır, 2008: 127). The frustration of 1990s, especially among university educated women was very influential in transforming the Islamic woman identity. It is possible to trace this transformation in Islamic literature (Çayır, 2008), through novels and stories by

Islamist intellectual women.[32] Educated Islamist women voice their grievances concerning their position in the labor market in interviews with journalists (Sever, 2006; Ongun, 2010). One of the common points among these interviews is the discontent with being 'sidelined' from public life and constrained to a domestic existence. Another common point is being over- exploited, such as being offered lower wages or being employed in lower positions as they do not have too many options in the labor market. Yet, except for a few studies in which the problems faced by professional, university educated women with headscarves in the labor market are explored (Cindoğlu, 2010; Jelen, 2011), employment and its role in shaping the Islamic woman identity are sidelined.[33]

2.5. Concluding Remarks

I suggest that the salient threads investigated here are weaved together by their common focus on the realm of status and cultural symbols as the battleground where the 'Islamic periphery' pushes its way towards the center to challenge the privileged position of 'the secularists'. The transformation in the connotations of the headscarf becomes a central focus of analysis as a case that crystallizes the Islamic move from the 'periphery' to the 'center'. In the pages above, I outlined the main lines of argumentation through which the meanings of the headscarf are argued to change sharply. The first line approaches the headscarf issue through the politics of difference and identity framework, and suggests that

[32] The novel *Halkaların Ezgisi* by Halime Toros (1997) is an example of such novels, as pointed out by Kenan Çayır (2008).

[33] Or it is discussed, if at all, in terms of how the university educated Islamist women reconciliate their religious convictions with their professional objectives and aspirations (Marshall, 2005; Marshall and Sabhlok, 2009).

the headscarf takes on modern connotations as women who wear it draw on a modern, democratizing discourse of asserting particularity and religious difference in the face of the exclusionary public sphere. The second line attributes young, urban, educated women with headscarves a modern search for authenticity and identity, in sharp rupture from traditional and patriarchal gender roles associated with the 'Muslim women' of a former generation. The third line focuses on the new consumption practices of the rising Islamic bourgeoisie, and puts forward the surge of *tesettür* fashion as a means by which women with headscarves challenge the established superiority of secular 'taste'.

The focus of the investigated post-1990 literature on the politics of difference and the struggle in the realm of cultural identities made a significant contribution to the studies on women and Islam. First, this focus has challenged the portrayal of Islam only as a residual category which is supposed to wither away in the process of modernization. Second, the politics of difference angle highlights the problems related to the exclusionary aspects of the 'difference blind' public sphere, and gives theoretical support to legitimate demands for the recognition of cultural and religious difference. Third, the frequently visited theme of 'resistant Muslim woman', despite its shortcomings, nevertheless contributes to a questioning of the perception of victimized, oppressed or manipulated Muslim woman identity.

Notwithstanding its contributions this literature is also permeated with limitations, silences and precluded questions. As I already pointed out in Chapter 1, the post-1990 studies which emphasize the 'subversive' and 'transformative' aspects of the headscarf are defined by an abundant focus on middle class and

university educated women with headscarves. Cihan Tuğal (2004) argues that it has become 'common sensical' in post-1990 scholarship to treat Islamism as 'middle class ethos' (Tuğal, 2004: 517):

> For the past fifteen years, scholars have over-reacted to the dominant Kemalist paradigm, which pictured proponents of Islamism as poor, rural, and thus ignorant, and have alternatively portrayed them as middle class, upwardly mobile, and "conscious." Although this reaction was partially justified, it missed the creative (not simply "rural" and "ignorant") input of non–middle-class sectors in the movement.

It is possible to observe the construction of the middle class and educated women's experiences revolving around the headscarf as the 'ideal typical storyline' of 'new veilers'. This storyline is embedded in a language either of subversive political assertion of identity and Islamic difference, or the production of 'new Islamic taste' through consumption. In order to emphasize the newness of the 'new veiler' category, which is actually pointing out to a middle class identity, there is a striking emphasis on how this identity is distant from the 'traditional' veilers[34], who do not articulate themselves within a language of subversion. Distancing oneself from traditional influences becomes almost a prerequisite of being deemed 'worthy' of research in the fold of the post-1990 research agenda, as a result of which those who remain out, are pushed to the margins.

Furthermore, the post-1990 literature also establishes almost as 'common sense' that the headscarf of 'new veilers' connotes a double resistance. First resistance is against exclusionary, difference blind public sphere. Second

[34] It should also be noted that the dichotomous understanding of 'modern-traditional' is being reproduced here, even though the literature initially aims to dismantle that dichotomy.

resistance is against the traditional, patriarchal interpretations of Islam especially as they pertain to limiting women to traditional gender roles. In other words, claiming visibility in the public sphere with the headscarf is portrayed as a resistance against state patriarchy and a modern act of searching for a more autonomous identity for Islamic women. This emphasis on resistance romanticizes it in Abu Lughod's (1990) terms and jeopardizes the questioning of relations of power that are influential in the formation of the subject and her agency. The complicated, multilayered question of how the subject and her agency are formed, to what extent and in what ways those formations interact with the structural constraints, gets to be relegated to a question of whether the headscarf means total oppression or total subversion.

The line of argumentation that takes the headscarf as a political assertion of cultural difference and Islamic identity also assumes that the choice of wearing the headscarf connotes an irreversible choice deeply embedded in identity. It is assumed that women wearing the headscarf have already made the irreversible commitment to define themselves within the terms of Islamic identity. However, this assumption gives short shrift to various negotiations revolving around the headscarf, and the various meanings that the headscarf may take in different social contexts. It is hard to argue that the decision to wear the headscarf essentially is the result of a thorough search for identity. It is also hard to argue that each and every woman with the headscarf is necessarily asserting a 'difference' that they almost heroically defend at the cost of being stigmatized: For some, it might well mean a way to *avoid* being different within their neighborhoods and a way to eschew the stigma of 'sticking out'. For others, it may be defined as a rite of

passage into different phases of life such as reaching puberty, getting married, giving birth to children, or having grandchildren. While trying to explain that the headscarf is not simply a matter of false consciousness and/or patriarchal oppression but rather a voluntary decision determined by religiosity, the literature bears the risk of overemphasizing the potential of the headscarf to subvert patriarchal relations of domination. This is not to say that women with headscarves are under heavier oppression of patriarchy than women without headscarves. However, while trying to prove the subversive, transformative, empowering aspects of the headscarf among urban, young, educated women the literature risks putting the limitations of patriarchal relations out of discussion.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND THE STORY OF THE FIELD

This chapter describes in detail how the research for this study was conducted, providing information on methodological concerns as well as the methods employed. The chapter first delineates the research process and proceeds with an explanation of the methodological concerns central to this dissertation. Then I give a detailed account of the fieldwork, explaining the rationale for the selection of cities and the retail settings as the field in which the research was conducted. I also explain when and where the focus groups, interviews and participant observation studies have been conducted and how participants of the research have been recruited. I conclude with a discussion of the aspects of the dialogue between the researcher and the researched.

3.1. Important Notes on the Research

This dissertation approaches the issue of headscarf through women's experiences with the headscarf in the context of retail sales jobs. The study is based on the findings gathered from qualitative research employing the methods of focus groups, in-depth interviews and participant observation studies in five

cities of Turkey, namely İstanbul, Ankara, Gaziantep, Denizli and Kayseri. Focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted with saleswomen wearing the headscarf and participant observation studies were conducted in different shopping settings in each city.

The research process started with a research proposal I wrote to fulfil the requirements of the 'Research Methods' course at Bilkent University Political Science PhD Programme in 2008. Thanks to the valuable guidance and collaboration of Dilek Cindoğlu, who offered the course and who later became my advisor, and Aslı Çırakman, the 'assignment' turned into a research proposal and then a research project funded by The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK). The research project was titled "Turban in the Market Place: Exploring Patriarchal Bargains Through Veiled Saleswomen" (Project code: 108K204). I worked as the research assistant during the whole course of the research project, which lasted for 12 months. During these 12 months, we conducted fieldwork with Professor Cindoğlu and Professor Çırakman in five cities of Turkey: İstanbul, Ankara, Gaziantep, Denizli and Kayseri between October 2008 and June 2009. Selin Akyüz, then a PhD candidate at Bilkent joined us in Kayseri, Denizli and Gaziantep. The fieldwork consisted of in-depth interviews, focus groups with saleswomen with headscarves and participant observation in the shopping settings of the five cities. I was present at all focus groups either as the moderator or as the assistant to the moderator. I also conducted a substantial number of the in-depth interviews, and joined the participant observation study during the fieldwork. It was approved by both professors that I would utilize the data in my doctoral dissertation.

After the research project was finalized, I continued with my own fieldwork in Ankara and in Istanbul. From June 2009 to April 2011, I conducted field study in various shopping settings in Ankara. This field study consisted of participant observation and short interviews with saleswomen and employers in shops. In 2012, my field study focused on Istanbul. I conducted one focus group, four in-depth interviews, several short interviews and extensive participant observation in different working settings. By this latest phase of my fieldwork, I had already acquired an understanding of the patterns in saleswomen's narratives. My questions as well as my scientific curiosity shifted to the structural patterns of the employment process. Therefore my fieldwork in Istanbul focused more on the effort to understand *how* employers choose employees for sales jobs. To this end, my interviewees include one shopping mall manager, a branch manager of a chain store, and a lawyer who specializes on cases of discrimination against women with headscarves.

At this point, an explanation about how my point of view and my research questions have evolved and how they differ from the questions of the research project funded by TUBITAK, is in order. When we first started the fieldwork with professors Cindoğlu and Çırakman, the questions tended to focus more on the 'functionality' of the headscarf in the lives of women who work in a visible position as saleswomen. For example, does it protect against harassment? To what extent does it give women leverage in their negotiations with men in their household in order to attain 'permission' or approval to work? Moreover, the research questions covered a wide range of issues related to being working women, such as women's negotiations in their marriage, whether working

elevates their status in their households, whether they thought about working after having children.

However, while formulating questions for my dissertation, I decided to limit myself to the politics of appearance in retail jobs, and how the headscarf is negotiated with regard to that politics of appearance. Therefore, both in my writing process and in my own fieldwork, I found myself much more focused on the demarcation lines between working settings that do and do not employ women with headscarves. How is the decision to employ or not employ a person is taken? Why is the headscarf perceived as detrimental to the image of some retail settings, and why is it appealing to others? What are the differences between workplaces that employ and do not employ women with headscarves? Moreover, upon having spent a considerable amount of time in the field, I also realized that the research participants formulated the meanings of their headscarves in ways that were invisible to previous studies on the headscarf. Therefore, my questions and my research differed from the TUBITAK research. However, I am very much indebted to that research not only for providing the major part of the data employed in the dissertation, but also for providing me the insight and perspective about the issues I focus on.

3.2. Methodological Concerns and Dealing with 'Experience'

Focusing on working life in the retail sector as the context of women's experiences with the headscarf serves the aim of questioning the pre-established categories within which the headscarf has been framed. I have already explained in the previous chapters the recurrent themes and the theoretical voids that I have

seen in the existing literature on women, Islam and headscarves. The salient methodological approach that I have observed in the literature was to locate the experiences of middle class women with headscarves as central to research. It was an important contribution to resort to the subjectivities, voices and experiences of women with headscarves. However, to me, those experiences seemed to be stripped of social context: They were taken at face value, as authentic sources of truth, without being contextualized in the relations of power within which they were formed. Emrah Göker, in an article (1999) where he criticizes studies by Göle (1993), Özdalga (1998), and Saktanber (1994, 1997), argues that these studies suffer the limitations of 'excessive subjectivism'. According to Göker, this excessive subjectivism leads to construing women with headscarves as subjects who construct their identities in absolute autonomy, as a result of which the entanglements of structure in the formation of identities and subjectivities are ignored. This critical point of view, which I share, informed the methodological concerns of this dissertation.

My first methodological concern was to do justice to the complexity of women's experiences with the headscarf and attain an in-depth understanding of the negotiations revolving around the headscarf in working life. Therefore I have avoided imposing readily given concepts, categories and dichotomies such as 'religious vs. secular' or 'traditional vs. modern' to infer consequences about how women with the headscarf experience working life. My second concern was about how to deal with those experiences, and the drawbacks that may arise when the concept of 'experience' is taken in an unproblematical, uncritical manner.

In an effort to reach an in-depth understanding of the ways in which women wearing headscarves locate themselves in working life as saleswomen, qualitative methodology is employed. Qualitative researchers, as Denzin and Lincoln (2005) assert, "attempt to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them" (p.3). Qualitative methodology and the related methods such as interviews (Oakley, 1981) and focus groups (Wilkinson, 1999) suggest a reciprocal relationship between the researcher and the researched, which challenges a positivist approach of inquiry that argues for the possibility of 'value free' and 'objective' research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The development of qualitative research has been in a close relationship with the development of feminist research that focuses on women's experiences and subjectivities (Olesen, 1994) for the sake of bringing out women's muted voices due to the lack of concepts when women's experiences contradict with the conventions of patriarchal dominance (Anderson and Jack, 1991). However, it is also argued that feminist research is distinct from qualitative research in terms of rejecting the power hierarchy between the researcher and the researched more strictly (Maynard, 1994). Nevertheless, this research has been guided by qualitative methodology in terms of looking into the meanings that working women with the headscarf bring to their experiences related to working life. The feminist sensitivity of avoiding a hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the researched has played a significant role during the fieldwork.

However, while trying to understand how research participants give meaning to the headscarf and how they formulate their experiences, I also had in mind my second methodological concern, which was to contextualize those

experiences within the relations of power within which they were shaped. Kelly, Burton and Regan (1994) suggest that especially since the 1980s, feminist research has glorified women's experiences of oppression as essential for acquiring awareness. Scott (1992) points out another aspect of the potential drawbacks of excessive reliance on experience as 'the authentic source of knowledge' by arguing that it results in the naturalization and essentialization of identity and "leads us to take the existence of individuals for granted rather than to ask how conceptions of selves are produced" (p.27). In line with this criticism, she criticizes feminist research for attributing an "indisputable authenticity" to women's experiences and establishing "incontrovertibly women's identity as people with agency" (Scott, 1992: 31).

Scott's suggestion against the drawbacks of putting too much focus on experience is to "work with experience" (1992: 37) by analyzing the processes of construction of experience and scrutinizing the process of identity production. In line with Scott's notice that "experience is at once always already an interpretation and in need of interpretation" (1992: 37); various researchers, including feminist researchers, have been scrutinizing economic, social and historical influences on the formation and framing of experience, instead of taking experience as a given (Olesen, 1994).

In the effort to 'work with experience' as Scott suggests, limiting the focus to the context of the retail labor market has been useful. It provides me with the opportunity to look into the structure of retail employment and reflect a broader view of where the headscarf stands in relation to the structural constraints and possibilities in the retail labor market. For instance, as I explain in detail in

Chapter 4, there are patterns of demarcation lines between the retail settings that employ and do not employ women with headscarves. By exploring those patterns, it is possible to attain an understanding of the politics of appearance in the retail labor market, and the social connotations of the headscarf within this context. The research also includes participant observation in different retail settings and in depth interviews with employers, such as a shopping mall manager, branch managers of chain stores, and owners of small scale shops.

3.3. Selection of Women in Sales Jobs, Five Cities and Methods

Before going into the details of the field, I would like to elaborate on the rationale for the selection of the retail sales jobs and the cities, İstanbul, Ankara, Gaziantep, Kayseri and Denizli as the field.

As I have detailed in the previous chapters, the previous research and literature on women with headscarves tends to focus on educated middle class and upper middle class women, and their experiences of exclusion vis a vis state monitored public sphere, most importantly the university and public sector jobs. Therefore, it was important for this research to reach relatively less educated women from lower middle class. Second, I wanted to explore the experiences of women within the context of working life in the private sector to see how the headscarf plays out in private sector employment. In other words, I was motivated by a curiosity about the experiences of women with headscarves who went out of their houses each day to earn a living, and who did not enjoy the privileges of wealth and/or a university degree. Retail sales jobs provide a fertile ground for the purposes stated above not only because they do not require a university degree,

but also due to the fact that they are consumer contact jobs including the dimension of 'visibility'.

The research focuses on five cities: İstanbul, Ankara, Denizli, Gaziantep, Kayseri. İstanbul and Ankara, as the two most populated and economically vibrant cities of Turkey were essential for this research. Denizli, Gaziantep and Kayseri are among the Anatolian cities popularly referred to as 'Anatolian Tigers'. These cities have witnessed considerable economic growth especially since the 1980s, due to the liberalization of economy. The economic liberalization process provided opportunities for Anatolian capital to connect to the global markets through an export oriented strategy. The Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) data demonstrates the substantial growth of the services sector in these three cities, as well as a surging percentage of woman workers joining the sector (TURKSTAT 2012). Moreover the retail settings in these three cities provide a lively and fruitful environment for research. In all the five cities, it is possible to find an abundance of small scale retailers as well as shopping malls and chain stores of well known brands. Last but not the least, the selection of these cities is sensitive to regional diversity.

3.4. Methods

This study employs focus groups, in-depth interviews and participant observation for data collection. Employing more than one method has been particularly useful, as each method has their own advantages that complement each other in terms of meeting the methodological concerns of the study.

The use of focus groups has been particularly helpful in terms of gaining insight into the experiences of participants in relational terms. Focus groups provide the researcher with the advantage to observe group interaction (Morgan, 1988), in which the participants find the opportunity to listen to one another, compare and discuss their experiences, allowing the researcher to gain insight into different levels and dimensions of those experiences (Morgan & Krueger, 1993). While seeing into different levels of the phenomenon being discussed, the researcher also has the advantage to contextualize individual narratives and meaning-making in a web of social relations established in the group (Wilkinson, 1999; Waterton & Wynne, 1999). In other words, "Focus groups meet the charge of decontextualization by being a contextual method – by providing an interactive social context within which meaning making can be observed" (Wilkinson, 1999: 66). Wilkinson (1999) and Raby (2010) also draw attention to the fact that focus groups reduce the researcher's power and control over the participants, for the participants are able to set their own agendas. This can be regarded both as an advantage and a disadvantage. Yet, I would uphold that this aspect of focus group study mostly worked to the advantage of this research because it helped me understand which issues were more important or more relevant to the respondents and made me question my previous expectations.

While focus group is an appropriate method for obtaining rich and relational, contextualized data, combining this method with in-depth interviews has been complementary to focus groups, especially for the sake of digging deeper into some individual experiences. It is suggested that focus groups should be complemented by interviews, because some voices that remain alternative to

the dominant group dynamics may be silenced during focus groups (Michell, 1999; Raby, 2010). Indeed, it is argued that in-depth interviews are particularly useful for "accessing subjugated voices and getting at subjugated knowledge" (Hesse Biber & Leavy, 2006: 123). During this research, focus groups have been useful for opening up and exploring the relationality of the issues that are common to the participants, such as the negotiations and dynamics of social relations at work. However, in-depth interviews were more helpful in digging deeper into the intracacies of the respondents' stories.

Participant observation in different types of retail settings was crucial to the research because it gave the possibility to explore the social relations in workplaces. How do saleswomen interact with their colleagues, bosses and customers? How do those interactions unfold in different working settings? Participant observation particularly made it possible to understand how the physical conditions, social relations and social texture differ among retail settings that do and do not employ women with headscarves.

3.4.1. Focus Groups

During the research, a total of fourteen focus groups were conducted. The participants were saleswomen with headscarves. In thirteen of these groups, marital status was controlled for. Krueger (1994) argues that "the rule for selecting focus group participants is commonality, not diversity" (p.14); because commonality among participants is crucial in order to facilitate self-disclosure in focus groups. In the case of this research, the participants in the focus groups are

situated on common ground in terms of sex, marital status and occupation, as well as their choice to wear the headscarf.

Controlling for marital status has been fruitful due to three main reasons. It is argued that marriage in Turkey is regarded as a crucial phase of socialization into adult life (White, 1994). Single women are usually referred to as 'young girl', (genç kız), which implies virginity, as well as a transition period between childhood and adulthood; whereas being a married woman carries the connotation of 'being an adult'. Due to this perceived difference in terms of status, it was necessary to control for maTrital status in order to eschew the possibility that the voices of some single participants may be silenced or prospects of self- disclosure may be hindered among both single and married women. Besides facilitating self-disclosure; the rationale behind controlling the marital status was first to single out the influence of marriage and women's life-cycles in the decision of wearing the headscarf, and second, to understand the differences among the patterns of negotiations that working single and married women are engaged in with their families.

The literature on focus groups suggests that it is not viable to set an 'ideal' number of participants. Krueger (1994) asserts that focus groups "must be small enough for everyone to have the opportunity to share insights and yet large enough to provide diversity of perceptions" (p.17). According to him, the number of participants can range from four to 12. Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) underscore that as opposed to the market research literature, which sets 8-12 as the ideal number of participants, fewer participants, even as few as three, may be more helpful for the purposes of most sociological research. In this research, an

avarage of six to seven participants participated in the focus groups. The least crowded group consisted of three participants, whereas the most crowded one consisted of 14 participants. Indeed, it was relatively harder to direct the discussion and ensure that everyone speaks in the focus group with 14 participants; yet the discussion was a lively one.

All of the focus groups were recorded with a digital tape recorder and transcribed by myself afterwards. Notes were also taken during the focus groups. The focus groups took one hour to one hour and a half. A semi-structured question form was followed, composed of open ended questions. The priority was in tracing the stories and discussions that were brought up and emphasized during the course of each focus group. Raby (2010) points out that being too strict in terms of following a rigidly structured focus group question form may prevent some rich discussions. In order to avoid such a drawback, it was particularly important to let the discussion flow before going into other topics and questions.

Table 1: Focus groups

	Focus group	**Number of respondents**	**Date**	**Duration**	**Location**
Ankara1	Single	3	22.02.2009	1’ 14’’	Optimar research company
Ankara2	Married	6	29.05.2009	1’ 06’’	Anafartalar Bazaar-Ulus

Table 1 (cont'd)

G.Antep1	Married	6	05.02.2009	52''	Local research company – meeting room
G.Antep2	Married	8	05.02.2009	1'12''	Local research company – meeting room
G.Antep3	Single	7	05.02.2009	1'33''	Local research company – meeting room
G.Antep4-	Single and married	6	04.02.2009	57''	Back office of a department store
Denizli1	Married	4	6.6.2009	1'	Upper (unused) floor of a department store
Denizli2	Single	5	6.6.2009	1'08''	Restaurant close to Kaleiçi Bazaar
İstanbul1	Married	8	12.2.2009	1' 03''	Local research company-meeting room

Table 1 (cont'd)

İstanbul2	Single	7	12.2.2009	1' 15''	Local research company-
İstanbul 3	Single	4	26.1.2012	1' 20''	A café in Pendik
Kayseri1	Married	14	20.3.2009	1' 30''	Hotel Meeting room- G. Arslan Hotel
Kayseri2	Single	5	20.3.2009	1' 04''	Hotel Meeting room- G. Arslan Hotel

3.4.2. In-depth Interviews

During the course of the research we conducted with professors Dilek Cindoğlu and Aslı Çırakman Deveci , 28 in-depth interviews with covered saleswomen and two in-depth interviews with employers. Six in-depth interviews with the saleswomen were conducted in Ankara, eleven in İstanbul, one in Gaziantep, seven in Denizli and three in Kayseri. Except for six interviews in which the interviewees preferred not to have their voices recorded, all interviews were recorded and transcribed. During the unrecorded interviews, detailed notes were taken. The in-depth interviews were semi-structured, allowing some flexibility of time and focus around the questions in which the interviewee's story offered a particularly rich insight. The following part of the field study I

conducted on my own includes in-depth interviews with one shopping mall manager, one manager of a chain store, and one phone interview with an uncovered saleswoman who worked for a store catering mostly to upper middle class covered women in İstanbul, Erenköy. I also conducted an in-depth interview with lawyer Fatma Benli, who has expertise on legal cases of discrimination, especially against women with headscarves. All the in-depth interviews that I conducted on my own behalf were conducted in İstanbul in 2012. They were also semi-structured interviews. I prepared different question forms which targeted to attain information about the employment process in different retail settings.

Table 2: In-depth interviews

City	In-depth interview
İstanbul	Number of in-depth interviews with saleswomen: 12 Number of in-depth interviews with employers and store managers: 2 1 interview with lawyer Fatma Benli Dates: 13 February 2009; 18 May 2009; 19 May 2009; 24 January 2012; 7 February 2012; 2 May 2012 Locations: Çıksalın – Okmeydanı: 2 markets, 2 pastry shops, 1 accessories shop, 1 stationary shop. Bayrampaşa: A restaurant inside the local bazaar Ümraniye: Two clothing shops in the local bazaar. Maltepe: One shopping mall, the manager's office Maltepe: Clothing chain store branch Mecidiyeköy: Fatma Benli's office One interview was conducted on the phone

Table 2 (cont'd)

Ankara	Number of in-depth interviews with saleswomen: 6 Date: 22 February 2009 Locations: Office of Optimar Research company. Ulus: A *tesettür* store in the local bazaar; Anafartalar Bazaar - Ulus: One clothing shop, one shop selling wedding gowns. Number of in-depth interviews with employers: 1 Date: 22 February 2009 Location: Ulus – A *tesettür* store (The interview was conducted with the manager of the store)
Gaziantep	Number of in-depth interviews with saleswomen: 1 Date: 4 February 2009 Location: A cosmetics shop on Gaziler Street Number of in-depth interviews with employers: 1 Date: 4 February 2009 Location: A three-storey department store, the employer's office.
Denizli	Number of in-depth interviews with saleswomen: 7 Dates: 27 February 2009 28 February 2009 6 June 2009 Locations: Two clothing shops in Kaleiçi Bazaar, two shops selling scarfs in Kaleiçi Bazaar, a *tesettür* store in Çınar square.
Kayseri	Number of in-depth interviews with saleswomen: 3 Date: 21 March 2009 Location: One jewellery store, one kids' clothing shop, one lingerie shop in Kale Bazaar.

3.4.3. Reaching the Respondents

During the initial phase of the fieldwork, recruiting participants for focus groups and respondents for in-depth interviews has proved to be a challenging task. One of the major reasons for this difficulty is the shortage of leisure time in the sales sector[35]. The saleswomen usually work for very long hours and have only one day off every week or every other week. Moreover, they do not go out for lunch: Usually lunch is eaten in a room at the back of the shops and stores, or behind the counter in small shops. In this way, lunch breaks are kept as short as possible; around 15 to 20 minutes. In addition to the limited time span spared for lunch, saleswomen start working in the early hours of the day and we have seldom come across shopping settings where they leave the workplace any earlier than 7 pm.[36]

In our attempts to recruit saleswomen as participants of the research, special attention was paid in order not to contact them through their employers. As Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) emphasize, employers are not ideal gatekeepers for recruiting focus groups participants as "…employers of casual labor may

[35] Cindoğlu and Durakbaşa (1996) point out a similar difficulty in their own research conducted with saleswomen and office workers. The authors give detailed information about the problems they encountered in recruiting especially saleswomen to participate in a focus group study. They, too, argue that the lack of leisure time on the part of saleswomen was the main cause of this difficulty. For details, see: Cindoğlu, Dilek and Durakbaşa, Ayşe (1996), "*İşyerinde Cinsiyete Dayalı Ayrımcılık ve İşverenlerin Kadın Çalışanlarına Karşı Tutumu: Büro ve Mağaza Çalışanlarına Derinlemesine bir Bakış*", Project Report, Ankara: Turkish Republic Prime Ministry Directorate General on the Status of Women.

[36] For example, in Anafartalar Bazaar in Ankara, the shops open up at around 9 – 10 am and close at around 7.30 pm. The working hours are similar in the shops around Kızılay. In Istanbul, in busy districts like Üsküdar and Ümraniye, the working hours can extend to as late as 8:00 pm or more. Shopping malls usually close at 10:00 pm. Many saleswomen in different cities complained that their working hours are unbearably long especially before religious holidays when people crowd the shops. In a department store in Gaziantep, the saleswomen complained that they were required to work until as late as midnight before the bayram holidays.

worry that group discussion between workers will disrupt the existing employer-employee relations" (p.10). If employers had been gatekeepers, it would also be far from helpful for the purposes of understanding the dynamics of the relations and negotiations at the workplace, for we as researchers would be situated as people somehow affiliated with the employers in the saleswomen's perspective. Moreover, it would not be ethically desirable to put participants under the pressure of their employers in their decision to participate in the research. Previous research suggests that recruiting employees through the gatekeeping of their employers creates a perception that participation in the research is an order by the employers, as well as locating the researcher in an authoritative position, widening the gap between the researcher and the researched (Lal, 1996: 194).

Due to these concerns regarding the recruitment of focus group participants and interviewees, the process of recruitment has become an even more challenging task. In the initial phase of the research, we visited shopping settings around Ulus in Ankara. After giving information about our research, we invited the saleswomen we met during the day to join us for a focus group study on Sunday. Our choice of day was based on the saleswomen's assertion that they can only have Sundays off; and that was usually not every week but every other week[37]. As the venue of the focus groups, we chose a book and coffee house in Kızılay, a district in the heart of Ankara which is the hub of bus lines, and

[37] Our first visit was to the Çıkrıkçılar Bazaar in Ankara, and this was the Bazaar in which the sales personnel took Sundays off. This may change in different shopping settings, for example in shopping malls, the sales personnel would usually have to choose a weekday, for the weekends are the busiest time in malls.

therefore the district that can most easily be reached from every part of the city[38]. We also told the saleswomen that we would have tea/coffee and refreshments, and that they would be given a special present to show our gratitude for participating in the research. Most of the women to whom we extended our invitation told us that they would indeed be very interested in joining the focus group on Sunday. The day before the focus group, I visited the shops and stores around Kızılay and invited eight more saleswomen with headscarves to join our focus groups. Three of these women had their next day off and told me that they would be happy to join the focus group. However, on Sunday not even one person showed up.

This initial experience led us to consider alternative ways to recruit respondents. It was understandable that they did not find enough motivation to spend hours of their valuable free day -which many of them only had once in two weeks- for the research. It would have been a better idea to compensate them for their time through payment, instead of presents. Most importantly, we did not have prior personal relations with the women we invited. Indeed, it was possible to establish relations through intensive fieldwork for a long time. However, considering that we had at most six to eight months for fieldwork[39], and four more cities to visit, this seemed to be a distant possibility.

After contemplating on the possibilities, we decided to not only give the participants an honorarium, but also to resort to the professional service of a research company in order to recruit participants for the research. Therefore we

[38] Kızılay is also a district which attracts the youth of different socio-economic status with its various coffeeshops, movies, book houses, and other venues of leisure time activities.
[39] The project was funded for 12 months; however within this time period we needed to complete the fieldwork, transcribe and analyse the data, and write a final report for the funding institution, TUBITAK.

made an agreement with a research and consultancy company based in Ankara, which also had local partner companies in all of the cities we would be visiting. This agreement has turned out to be quite fruitful, for it provided us with a large network of relations in all of the cities, where we carried out the research. The service we purchased from the research company, Optimar Research and Consultancy, included finding participants for focus groups and respondents for in-depth interviews[40], paying their honorarium[41], as well as organizing the venue of focus groups and providing the refreshments. In all the cities other than Ankara, the same services were provided by the local partner companies of Optimar.

In finding the respondents, the research companies in all five cities either used the contacts they had through their previous research, or assigned groups of researchers the task of visiting shops and inviting saleswomen to the focus groups. Regarding each focus group, we were given the details about the working settings of the participants, such as where they were located and what kind of products they were selling.

When I continued with my own fieldwork, I did not have funding. Hence for the focus group I conducted in İstanbul, Pendik, I reached the participants through my personal relations. The four participants who joined this focus group were women working in a shop in Pendik selling overcoats especially to women

[40] The company was carefully informed about the concern about not resorting to the gatekeeping of employers. The company's performance in terms of meeting these requirements was noteworthy. The interviewees as well as focus group participants would confirm that they were not contacted through their employers. Even though there were occasions where the employer also had to be consulted in order to ask for permission for the saleswomen's time, that happened only after the saleswomen was directly contacted and accepted participation.

[41] The honorarium for participation in the research either as a focus group or an interview respondent was designated as 20 Turkish Liras (approximately 14 USD as of December 2010).

with headscarves. I personally knew one of the saleswomen working in this shop and she brought her co-workers for the focus group meeting. For the in-depth interviews, I connected to many potential interviewees – such as shopping mall managers and professionals in the human resources departments of chain stores- through mail and phone. However, only one shopping mall manager accepted to give an interview. Another interviewee who returned my mail and accepted the interview was lawyer Fatma Benli. The other two interviewees, one chain store branch manager and one saleswoman were reached through personal contact.

3.4.4. Participant Observation

The focus groups and in-depth interviews were complemented by participant observation study in the shopping settings of the five cities. A considerable amount of time was spent conducting participant observation in different shopping settings of each city. These shopping settings included shopping malls, central marketplaces[42] and small scale neighborhood shops[43].

During these visits, we talked to the saleswomen whenever they were available and whenever they could spare a short time from their heavy working

[42] By 'central marketplaces', I mean bazaars which have been well known shopping districts of the cities for decades, especially hosting clusters of shops and stores with particular focus on certain products. These marketplaces and their distinctions from other retail landscapes, are thoroughly explained in Chapter 4.

[43] The small scale neighborhood shops are distinct from shops in central marketplaces in that, they are more scattered both in terms of space and in terms of the products sold. Small scale neighborhood shops are more likely to be catering to the needs of certain neighborhoods, hence they are scattered in terms of products. One typical example of neighborhood shops would be the ones in the district of Çıksalın, Okmeydani, which I visited during the fieldwork in Istanbul. These were different kinds of shops, selling a range of products from pastry to accessories and stationary items. Unlike the shops in central marketplaces, these shops are very small, typically employ one salesperson, and cater to the limited clientele in that particular neighborhood. Small neighborhood shops and their distinctions from other retailers are thoroughly analyzed in Chapter 4.

day. In these short and informal interviews[44], we introduced ourselves and gave brief information about the research. Such informal interviews were conducted with around 70 saleswomen, during the visits to shopping settings[45]. Most of these saleswomen wore the headscarf. These informal interviews were always carried out within the shops and within limited time periods, around 10 to 15 minutes. In none of these informal interviews was it possible to get permission for tape recording. On some of the occasions we did not attempt to ask for a tape recording, for such a question would have disturbed the natural flow of the conversation. Sometimes notes were taken immediately, although some other times I refrained from taking out a piece of paper and a pen for the sake of a smooth interview. In these occasions, notes were taken right after the shop visits.

When we had the chance to introduce ourselves and talk to the saleswomen, they usually welcomed us warmly, usually despite suspicious and unsympathetic glances from the bosses, who were almost always men. There have been many occasions in which the male shop owners seemed to be especially concerned with the possibility that we may be journalists, and sometimes directly asked us whether this research would be published in newspapers with the names of their shops and their employees. The saleswomen, on the other hand, seemed more inclined to be convinced about the information we gave about the research.

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[44] Jorgensen (1989) emphasizes that the informal interviews during participant observation study should be similar to casual and free – flowing conversation (p.88). In line with this argument, in informal interviews, the objective was to pose spontaneous questions which would reveal the dynamics of working as a saleswoman in that particular city and the particular shopping setting. Sometimes, if the flow of the interview brought up an issue that is of interest to the question form which is used in focus groups and in-depth interviews, we would briefly ask the respondent's idea about that issue as well.

[45] This number includes both the TUBITAK funded fieldwork and the fieldwork I conducted later on in Ankara and in Istanbul.

We seldom visited the shops in a group of three. Most often, we would pay our visits alone or in groups of two. The idea to break down our research team during shop visits came up in the initial phase of our fieldwork, first due to the concern of not crowding the -usually narrow- shops. The second concern was that, going around in a group of three attracted too much attention, especially in less crowded shopping settings. In the occasions when the saleswomen seemed very busy with customers, we spent time in the shops as customers, and had the chance to observe the clientele, the relationships between the customers and saleswomen and among the sales personnel, as well as the dynamics of the relations between saleswomen and the employers. Immediately after these visits, I took detailed notes of the observations.

In the latter part of the fieldwork which I conducted on my own, and which lasted from 2010 to 2012, I paid several visits to various street stores, shopping malls and central bazaars in Ankara and in Istanbul, engaging in participant observation and informal interviews. In 2012 in Istanbul, I spent three days looking for shops that seek sales employees in Maltepe, and I inquired about the conditions required to get the job.

The participant observation study during the visits to the shopping settings served to provide the research with depth in terms of (1) observing differences among shopping settings across and within different cities and distinguish their unique characteristics, with particular regard to how those characteristics shape and influence saleswomen's working lives; (2) giving insight about the kinds of shopping settings where women with headscarves are employed, and the social texture of these shopping settings; (3) giving the opportunity to observe the role of

the headscarf in influencing the relations within the workplace, including employer-employee relations as well as relations with customers; (4) giving insight about the set of requirements of the employers in their decisions of employment in various different retail settings.

Table 3: Participant observation

	Participant observation: dates, locations
İstanbul	Dates: Dec. 30 2008- January 4 2009; January 15-17 2009; February 11-13 2009; May 16-19 2009; June 20-22 2009; January 24-25 2012; February 7-8 2012 Shopping malls:Colony (Sefaköy); Armoni (Sefaköy); Viaport (Kurtköy); Historia (Fatih); Hayatpark (Güneşli); Capitol (Altinuzade); Metro City (Levent); Kanyon (Levent); Akmerkez (Etiler); İstinyepark (İstinye); Cevahir Alışveriş Merkezi (Şişli); Maltepe Park (Maltepe) Neighborhood bazaars: Mahmutpaşa, Üsküdar, Beyoğlu, Bayrampaşa, Ümraniye, Çıksalın-Okmeydanı, Maltepe, Pendik
Ankara	Dates: October 2008; November 4 – 11 2008; February 22 2009; May 29 2009; November 2010. Shopping malls: Ankamall, Cepa, Panora, Optimum Outlet, Gordion, Armada, Antares, Arcadium Neigborhood bazaars: Ulus bazaar, Anafartalar Bazaar, Çıkrıkçılar Bazaar, Kızılay, Kızılay subway bazaar, Tunalı Hilmi Street

Table 3 (cont'd)

Gaziantep	Dates: February 3-6, 2009 Shopping settings: Shopping malls: - Migros Bedesten - G.antep YKM Neighborhood bazaars: - Old Bazaar in Gaziler Street
Denizli	Dates: February 27– March 1, 2009 June 5-6, 2009 Shopping settings: Shopping malls: - Teraspark - Forum Çamlık - Neighborhood bazaars: - Kale İçi Bazaar - Babadağlar Bazaar - Çınar Square
Kayseri	Dates: March 19- 21, 2009 Shopping settings: Shopping malls: -Beğendik -Kayseri Park Neighborhood bazaars: - Düvenönü - Kale Bazaar

3.5. Enabling Dialogue with the Respondents

There is a plethora of questions and issues concerning the relation between the researcher and the researched in the process of qualitative research. How are the differences between the 'researcher' and 'research participant' negotiated? Do these differences influence the tone of the answers given? How is it possible to avoid a hierarchical relation? How should the researcher situate herself vis a vis her interviewees?

It is essential to acknowledge at this point that I do not wear a headscarf and never considered wearing it. I am aware that conducting fieldwork exclusively with covered saleswomen carries the risk of being situating us as an 'outsider'[46]. It is indeed debatable whether the social differences between the researchers and the researched end up in helpful or adversarial results to the research. Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) point out that the identity, dress, accent and behaviour of the researchers may potentially influence the data collected, especially if the participants of the research are brought together on the basis of shared characteristics different from the researchers' (p.14). Approaching the issue from a different perspective, Dwyer and Buckle (2009) underscore the blurred space between the positions of 'outsider' and 'insider' as opposed to a dichotomous understanding, and suggest a creative utilization of this blurred space and the tensions it bears. Waterton and Wynne (1999) argue that the researchers' position as 'outsiders' enhances the negotiation of identity among the

[46] This would not mean that women with and without the headscarf are exclusively seperate collectivities; however considering the fact that the focus of the research was on saleswomen with the headscarf, it would be viable to take into account the probability that I could be perceived as 'outsider' in relation to this group.

researched and helps to make better use of the major advantage of focus group research, which is its potential to reveal the relationality of perspectives (p.133).

During the course of the research, I did not particularly have the feeling that as a researcher I had significant problems in terms of establishing rapport with the participants. The mutual exchange of experiences related to marriage, relations with in-laws, the common experience of being working women and topics related to motherhood, served as common ground. Saktanber (2002) explains that during her fieldwork with the residents of an urban complex who aim to design their lives according to Islamic precepts, being a wife and mother facilitated her acceptance to the field (p.70). Indeed, in the case of this research, common references to gender roles as wives and mothers enhanced the ability to establish rapport with the women[47]. Similarly, Günseli Berik (1996) elucidates that in her research about women carpet weavers in 10 villages of Turkey, her conformity to gender roles in the villages "levelled her standing with the women" (p.64) and reduced the class differences[48]. In this research too, the commonalities in gender roles moderated the perception of social differences[49].

[47] I am referring to the similarity in terms of the relationship between the researcher and researched and how common gender roles helped mitigate the differences; rather than a similarity between Saktanber's respondents and ours.

[48] Berik (1996) refers to the 'conformity dilemma' she went through during her research, and self-reflexively questions her attitude of settling down for a subordinate role vis a vis village men, as well as her choice to conduct her fieldwork in the company of her husband. However, she concludes that challenging the sensitivities of the community would make the research impossible (p.63).

[49] By 'social difference' I do not only mean the difference related to the headscarf, but also differences in terms of class and social status. By social status, I especially refer to working in a university; because most of the participants of the research have talked at length about their unfulfilled wishes and spirations to have a university education and obtain a university degree. In other chapters, it is discussed how the saleswomen's narratives construct university education as almost the most important threshold that defines a woman's social status. Therefore, it is possible

There were instances in which the participants praised me for being modest in clothing and attitude. Some participants argued that there are covered women a lot less modest in terms of attitude, even in terms of clothing. These remarks seemed to serve as a way to emphasize similarities; employing 'modesty' as a keyword. I would usually be dressed in trousers, shirts, jackets and low-heel shoes; which is not different from my everyday clothing style. For example, one saleswoman in Gaziantep working in a home textile store said that I would not attract men's attention with my clothes even though I did not have a headscarf, whereas "there were covered girls working in the shops around, who attract a lot of attention with their make-up and clothes". This comment and many similar narratives pointed out and exposed a pattern of displeasure among covered women regarding the way some 'other' covered women dress or conduct themselves[50].

The social difference between me and the participants was further mitigated due to my position as a student, trying to complete a dissertation. For example, one saleswoman in Istanbul, whom I met during participant observation study, said she was working as a saleswoman in order to provide her two sisters with the opportunity to continue their education, and offered me further help with the research because she liked to help students very much, especially girls like her sisters, 'trying to achieve something'.

There were only a few participants who drew attention to differences on the basis of being covered / uncovered. In one of those cases, one participant

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to argue that from their perspective, perhaps the most important distinction between 'us' and 'them' was related to university education.

[50] This pattern of narratives is thorughly analyzed in Chapter 6.

asked us what we thought of covered women, and "whether we, like others, discriminate against students who wanted to veil in the universities." In this instance and few others, when my opinion about the headscarf ban (which was implemented until 2010) in the universities was asked, I expressed briefly that I did not find this ban fair. Farquhar and Das (1999) discuss the extent to which the researchers should disclose their opinions and experiences during qualitative research; pointing out that whereas too much disclosure may be patronizing, too little disclosure may make the participants uncomfortable and lead to suspicion about the research agenda (p.57, 58). In the case of this research, the risks of 'too little disclosure' are quite relevant. Considering that many of the participants of the research had experiences of untoward interventions from strangers, mostly from uncovered women, in different public spaces because of their headscarves, it was understandable that some of them were curious about my opinion on this issue. More importantly, I agree with Oakley's (1981) critique of the classical sociological standards of interviewing, which uphold that the researchers should not answer interviewee questions for the sake of neutrality and objectivity. Similar to Oakley, I think that the participants of the research deserved honest answers, especially when they were expected to honestly expose various aspects of their private experiences related to the headscarf.

There were a lot of moments during the fieldwork in which I thought that the participants were pleased about being consulted for an academic research. This seemed to be at least partly related to the connotations of the notion of

university as an institution that closes its doors to women with headscarves[51]. Contributing to a university research meant recognition. I would maintain that more than anything, this was the main reason why they spared time for the research even during their heavy work routine, sometimes under the unapproving gaze of their bosses, and shared their experiences sincerely. Skeggs (1994) explains that during her long-term ethnography with young white working class women, the women enjoyed being a part of her research, and contends that their "sense of self-worth was enhanced by being given an opportunity to be valued, knowledgeable and interesting" (p.81). She further argues that the women she worked with during her research were active agents in the research, not passive victims or "just objects of a voyeuristic bourgeois gaze" (Skeggs, 1994: 81). For the case of this research, I agree with Skeggs in terms of my conviction that the saleswomen enjoyed sharing their experiences and were content about those experiences being a contribution to an academic research. Considering the tension that modern Turkish history bears with regard to the headscarf ban in the universities, this aspect of the research is even more accentuated for the case of women wearing headscarves.

[51]The headscarf ban is no longer implemented in universities since 2010. However, a substantial part of the fieldwork took place before 2010.

CHAPTER 4

SITUATING THE RESPONDENTS

This chapter aims to provide a profile of the respondents of the research. To this end, the chapter explains the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and the types of shopping settings where they are employed. The purpose is to provide an understanding of the social relations within which the respondents' experiences of working life are shaped. The experience of a saleswoman working for a well known brand in a busy district, selling expensive clothing, is very different from a saleswoman working in a little shop selling stationary items in a small neighborhood. In order to contextualize these different experiences, this chapter first addresses the distinctions among working settings. Then it goes on to detail the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

4.1. Working Settings

This section looks into the different settings in which the respondents of the research are working. The analytical distinctions among different working

settings are delineated and the fieldwork observations regarding the experiences related to each working setting are thoroughly depicted.

In the attempt to grasp the experiences of saleswomen, the specific social environment of their working settings should be carefully focused on. This leads us to look into different spaces in which the activity of buying and selling takes place, such as crowded and noisy bazaars, modest street shops in neighborhoods, luxurious department stores, shiny shopping malls, and so on. The literature on the different experiences generated by shopping settings and how the social space influences those experiences (Lewis, 1990; Shields, 1992; Falk&Campbell, 1997; Miller et.al., 1998; Gökarıksel, 1998; Tokman, 2001; Durakbaşa&Cindoğlu, 2005; Erkip, 2003, 2005) mostly focuses on the consumer side. Miller et. al. (1998) argue that the social spaces in which the experience of shopping takes place, are significant for identity construction, especially with regard to the expression of class identities. Accordingly, shopping provides a medium in which a particular expression of class takes place, "and therefore adds its own contribution to what we understand and experience class to be" (Miller et al., 1998: 187).

Whereas this argument is voiced with regard to the consumer's experience of shopping, the space in which the experience takes place is also important with regard to the saleswomen who work in that space. It is argued that working in multinational, large scale retailers (Tutalar, 2007) and shopping malls implies a higher status for saleswomen in terms of both class and gender identities as it reflects a professional identity representing a well-known brand (Durakbaşa and Cindoğlu, 2005); or as it diffuses the image of a fashionable, modern, middle class

woman (Abaza, 2001). The kind of merchandise that is being dealt with is also significant in terms of indicating the social and cultural capital of the employer and the employee (Bourdieu, 1984: 99-169). It is possible to elucidate this argument through the case of the retail sector, for the kind of merchandise sold[52] implies different levels of social and cultural capital for the salespeople (Howe, 1977; Benson, 1986).

During the fieldwork, a significant portion of the participant observation study was conducted in shopping malls[53], out of the urge to learn about the working experiences of saleswomen with headscarves in these working settings. Yet, it was striking finding of the fieldwork that even in shopping malls very much frequented by customers wearing headscarves, saleswomen wearing them are seldom, if ever, employed[54]. We have also been told various times during the fieldwork in malls that a lot of women with headscarves uncover during working hours in order to work in the malls. Furthermore, the narratives of the saleswomen

[52] In Louise Kapp Howe's study (1977) 'Pink Collar Workers' which is about the experiences of working women in occupations usually referred to as 'women's work', such as beautician, waitress, office worker, and saleswoman, she argues that selling coats in a department store is conceived to be more prestigious than selling bargain – priced items; and that working in the home – equipment department is the most prestigious of all.

[53] See Table 3 in Chapter 3 for detailed information about the settings where participant observation study was conducted.

[54] We encountered saleswomen in shopping malls on very rare occasions. In the Antares shopping mall in Ankara, there were headscarved saleswomen working in Setrms, a *tesettür* store, and one saleswoman in another shop. We learned that it was her uncle's shop. We met one headscarved saleswoman working in a scarf stand in Cevahir shopping mall in Istanbul. She told us that her employer had to struggle for six months in order to get the shopping mall management's approval for a headscarved saleswoman. The other rare cases were in İstanbul, Hayat Park Güneşli and Historia, Fatih. In many shopping malls, such as TerasPark in Denizli and Colony in Sefaköy, İstanbul, we learned that a lot of headscarved saleswomen uncover during working hours in order to keep their jobs. In various shopping malls, even though we explained the research, the saleswomen and managers of stores were quite anxious about questions related to whether headscarved saleswomen are employed in those malls.

with headscarves who participated in the research were permeated with stories of rejection to job applications by large scale retailers in shopping malls, not to mention signs of subtle envy towards the saleswomen working in malls for they allegedly have better wages and access to luxurious benefits such as daily hair dresser allowances.

The exclusion of women with headscarves from employment in shopping malls, including those with a large base of headscarved clientele, is an intriguing phenomenon on many levels and raises various questions, which will be dealt with in Chapter 5. Yet, what is critical for the purposes of this chapter is to look into the characteristics of the retail settings where women with headscarves are employed.

While the respondents of our research are excluded from employment in shopping malls, they are employed mostly in small scale retailers and *tesettür* chain stores. The fieldwork data reveals three categories of working settings in which the research participants are employed: Central marketplaces consisting of small scale retailers, small neighborhood shops and *tesettür* chain stores. The main question behind the categorization concerns the differences among the web of social relations that the saleswomen inhabit in these working settings.

Most of the previous research on the social aspects of shopping settings in contemporary Turkey concerns large scale retailers, particularly shopping malls, and predominantly focuses on the consumer experience (Gökarıksel, 1998; Erkip, 2003, 2005; Helvacıoğlu, 2000; Tokman, 2001; Akçaoğlu, 2008) with rare exceptions focusing on the salespeople's experiences (Durakbaşa & Cindoğlu,

2005; Tutalar, 2007) and small scale retailers (Özcan, 2000). The literature is limited in terms of analyzing the social relations weaved around saleswomen in large scale retailers and various kinds of small scale shopping settings in a comparative perspective. The literature on *tesettür* brands usually analyses *tesettür* chain stores as the prominent venue which contributes to the transformation of Islamic actors, particularly women wearing headscarves, through patterns of modern consumption (Kılıçbay & Binark, 2002; Navaro-Yashin, 2002; Sandıkçı & Ger 2005, 2007, 2010; Gökarıksel & Secor, 2009)[55]. Yet, while focusing extensively on the transformation of the consumers of *tesettür* brands, this literature seldom mentions the experiences of the women who sell those brands. Neither does it address *tesettür* stores as actual retailing spaces which make decisions regarding where to locate their stores, what kind of norms to uphold in employing salespeople, how to address and how to establish rapport with customers, and how to organize the relations among employers and employees.

While aiming to provide an understanding of the social relations within which the respondents' experiences of working life are being shaped, this chapter addresses the limitations mentioned above by depicting nuances between different retail spaces through fieldwork data. In the following sections, the distinctions of

[55] In these studies, *tesettür* brands are analyzed as agents that lead to the "articulation of a religious practice to the consumption culture" (Kılıçbay & Binark, 2002: 498); as primary shapers of consumer identities that turn the image of a "pious woman" to "modern consumer" (Sandıkçı & Ger, 2007: 196-197); as the highlight of the debate of compatibility between fashion and Islam (Navaro-Yashin, 2002; Gökarıksel & Secor, 2009); or with regard to their role in the routinization and aesthetization of the headscarf (Sandıkçı & Ger, 2010).

each category of working settings will be delineated and discussed with regard to points such as the physical space; the kind of merchandise sold; the consumers that the shops address to; the attitudes and appearance of saleswomen; saleswomen's ways of communicating with the employers, coworkers and customers; and the extent to which the prices and terms of doing business are standardized.

4.1.1. Central Marketplaces

Central marketplaces could be defined by their long term existence in a certain location of the urban area and their advantage of attracting customers from all over the city. They consist of independently owned, small scale, single location retailers. Some of these central marketplaces are traditionally famous for a certain segment of products. These retailers "would enjoy those agglomeration economies which are realized through the growth of a total business cluster at one location" (Tokatlı and Boyacı, 1998: 346). In other words, the independent shops in the marketplace are specialized in a few products such as clothing or home textile; so that consumers are most likely to visit that marketplace when in need of that segment of products. Therefore although the shops are small and independent, they have the chance to address to a wide base of customers. There are also marketplaces that do not focus on one certain product but still attract customers from different parts of the city with the advantage of being in a well established, well known place.

A significant portion of the fieldwork was conducted in central marketplaces such as the Babadağlar Bazaar in Denizli, Çıkrıkçılar and Anafartalar Bazaar in Ankara, Mahmutpaşa in İstanbul, Gaziler Street in Gaziantep and Kale Bazaar in Kayseri. These shopping districts are usually busy and popular, frequented particularly by lower-middle class women in search of cheap clothing or home textiles. For example, in the Babadağlar Bazaar in Denizli, shoppers find high quality home textiles sold relatively cheaply. The Çıkrıkçılar Bazaar in Ankara hosts hundreds of shoppers in search of cheap clothing items, particularly for special occasions like an engagement ceremony or a wedding, as well as prospective brides looking for home textiles to complete their trousseaus. In Istanbul, Mahmutpaşa Bazaar is among the most famous shopping districts of this huge city for those seeking cheap clothing and home textiles.

The life in central marketplaces is very lively and noisy, almost chaotic, with crowds of shoppers going through the whole marketplace in an effort to find the best goods for the best price. It is usually the shop owners, who are almost always men, that stand in the doorway of the shops loudly inviting customers to have a look inside, or exchanging loud jokes with the owners of other shops. One can easily tell that the shops have been there for a long time, and the owners are well acquainted with one another. In all of the central marketplaces we visited during fieldwork, the sales staff mostly consisted of women, both with and without headscarves, while the men in the shops are more likely to be employers.

Similar to the sales staff, the clientele of these chaotic but lively bazaars consists predominantly of women, both with and without the headscarf, and there are stores that sell clothes for both: For example, one saleswoman in Çıkrıkçılar Bazaar in Ankara showed us how a short-sleeve dress can be combined with a full-length sleeve jacket and a headscarf covering the head and the neck; or plain trousers can be combined with long tunics, easily turning into "*tesettür*-friendly" clothing. She also claimed that many women with the headscarf enjoy combining different clothes to their own taste rather than shopping at *tesettür* stores. Regardless of whether she was right or not, the fieldwork observations usually confirmed that the shops in such marketplaces usually address to women both with and without the headscarf, which might be related to the fact that they do not want to limit their wide clientele base.

The prices in the shops of central marketplaces are usually wide open for negotiation and bargaining. Therefore the prices on tags are not always necessarily low; probably with a concern to leave some space for bargaining. For example, in the Anafartalar Bazaar in Ankara, to my surprise, I could not find any skirts cheaper than 90 Turkish Liras and coats were around 250 Turkish liras[56]. However, the saleswomen in different shops commonly insisted over and over that 'we could come to an agreement over prices'. When I tried bargaining, I was again surprised, this time to see that the price of a skirt could easily go from 90 TL down to 50 TL's, although I am not the toughest bargainer.

[56] 90 TL's is approximately 56 USD, 250 TL's is 155 USD, as of February 2011.

The fact that the prices in these shops are so open to negotiation demonstrates the lack of standardization in small scale retailers in central marketplaces which is among the most manifest points of distinction from large scale retailers where prices are standardized. A similar distinction also related to standardization is easily observed in the terms of communication with the customers. Unlike the large scale retailers in shopping malls, where the communication between saleswomen and customers is usually[57] impersonal and distanced (Tutalar, 2007; Akçaoğlu, 2008, Durakbaşa & Cindoğlu, 2005), the relations are informal in central marketplaces. This is especially visible in the ways of addressing customers: Saleswomen intend to call female customers with words such as 'sister' (abla), or 'aunt' (teyze) if they are old, or sometimes even 'honey' (tatlım, canım) if they are younger than themselves. Male customers are likely to be called 'brother' (abi) or 'uncle' (amca) if they are older. This reference to family categories is not limited to the communication with customers. Saleswomen in these marketplaces almost always call their employers and elder co-workers as 'brother' (abi), not to mention the narratives in which they refer to their relations with their employers and co-workers through analogies of family relations.

The fact that the saleswomen in the small scale retailers of central marketplaces communicate with their customers in informal ways as opposed to

[57] Tutalar (2007) notes that the impersonal terms of communication may be 'undone' in certain malls where the majority of customers are more likely to be of a rural background. Miller et. Al. (1998) point out the differences of salespeople-customer communication between a working class shopping center and a middle class shopping center in Britain.

their counterparts in large scale retailers is also related to the differences in sales methods. Saleswomen working in central marketplaces are very diligent in convincing the customer to buy a certain product. In their attempt to convince, they show constant effort to develop rapport with the customer, try to understand what the customer wants and consistently offer different products as well as discounts on prices. It is argued that in shopping malls, the interaction between the customer and the saleswoman is secondary; rather the product is the primary element of sales (Durakbaşa & Cindoğlu, 2005; Tutalar, 2007). Unlike shopping malls, in these central marketplaces, selling a product is quite a competitive activity; it requires engaged interaction with the customers. Unlike in shopping malls where the customers can wander around in the shops just looking at products, in small scale shops of central marketplaces, saleswomen will immediately attend to the customers. Previous research (Gökarıksel, 1998; Tokman, 2001; Tutalar, 2007) demonstrates that shopping mall consumers are irritated by being attended too closely. Accordingly, these consumers find such attitude by the sales personnel as 'less civilized', and 'not Western enough' (Tokman, 2001: 117-118). Similar research in a Western context emphasizes the class dimension instead: Miller et. al.'s research (1998) in Britain depicts that attentive attitude by salespeople is regarded as normal and friendly among working class shoppers but received with discontent by middle class shoppers.

Last but not the least, in terms of appearance, saleswomen with and without the headscarf are both employed in central marketplaces. Especially in larger cities such as Istanbul and Ankara, the saleswomen with headscarves

display a notable heterogeneity in terms of clothing and make-up. It is possible to see all kinds of colors and patterns in headscarves, blouses and skirts, as well as heavy and eye catching make up. Furthermore, there are different and unusual styles in which the headscarves are tied and knotted. Notwithstanding this lively diversity of colors, styles and patterns, however, there seems to be certain silent standards in terms of lengths of skirts. These standards apparently apply to the saleswomen without the headscarf as well: It is seldom possible to see skirts beyond or just below the knee or low-cut blouses.

4.1.2. Small Neighborhood Shops

Small neighborhood shops are small scale, independently owned, single location retailers like the shops in central marketplaces. However, it is possible to differentiate them from the former category because rather than addressing to a wide group of clients from different parts of the city, neighborhood shops address to their own neighborhood. Moreover, rather than focusing on a common product with nearby shops, small shops in the same neighborhood sell different products to answer the needs of that certain residential area. The owners of these shops make location decisions based on where they themselves live or familiar areas (Tokatlı & Boyacı, 1998). While the shops in central marketplaces we visited during our fieldwork mostly focused on clothing and home textiles, the neighborhood shops included pastry shops, stationary shops, small neighborhood markets, ornament shops, etc.

The differences mentioned above are significant for the purposes of this chapter because they lead to subtle variations in the texture of life in these working settings. Shops are even smaller, and usually employ one salesperson if any. Rather than lively crowds of shoppers coming from different parts of the city, small neighborhood shops are frequented by customers from the nearby residential area, hence they are more likely to have former personal acquaintance with the shop owners and salespeople. It is argued that urban lower middle class women prefer small scale neighborhood shops, due to closer personal relations with the shop owners, which make it possible to pay later (Durakbaşa & Cindoğlu, 2005). Özcan's research (2000) about food retailers in districts of different income groups in Ankara confirms this argument and maintains that the shopping spaces of different income groups are getting more and more separated (p. 111); hence the distinction between small and large retailers getting more visible along class lines.

The saleswomen working in small neighborhood shops have informal ways of communicating with their customers, similar to their counterparts in central marketplaces, yet they are more likely to have long term acquaintances with the customers. Methods of selling are not as competitive and aggressive as the methods in central merketplaces; in fact a customer visiting a neighborhood stationary shop or a pastry shop already knows what s/he will be buying, and is already familiar with the saleswoman, hence not much effort is needed. Still, the saleswomen need to keep up friendly, informal manners in order not to alienate customers.

The saleswomen who work in neighborhood shops are usually from the same neighborhood. Their narratives suggest that working in the same neighborhood, in a familiar setting has been particularly helpful in negotiating the option of working outside home with parents and/or husbands. The interviewees in the district of Çıksalın in Istanbul constitute a revealing example. Çıksalın is home to many lower-middle class families, most of whom have migrated from Eastern Anatolia. Although it is situated on a hill on the outskirts of one of the most central districts of İstanbul, namely Beyoğlu, it rather looks like a small town, with narrow and neglected streets, outworn adjacent buildings and small, untended shops selling groceries, pastries or cheap clothing items. All of the six saleswomen interviewed in different shops in Çıksalın were living in this neighborhood. Both the married and the single interviewees emphasized that it would not be possible for them to work in another part of the city. One of them had attempted to do so, however her attempt ran into her brother's resistance who allowed her only on the condition that she would work in Çıksalın. In their narratives, they all referred to the feeling of familiarity, trust and comfort of working in the same neighborhood. After all, they did not have to take a crowded public bus and suffer the traffic jam to go to another district in the huge city. The married ones had kids attending nearby schools who could come to the small shops after school and even help their mothers with sales. Yet, the interviewee who had formerly encountered her brother's resistance about working outside Çıksalın, also pointed out the drawbacks of working in the same neighborhood. This single, 26 year-old woman, with an unconventional style of wearing the

headscarf that left her neck and ears out, and make-up that seems relatively heavy when compared to the other saleswomen working in the shops nearby, complained that she had to resist interventions to her appearance. She explained that since her family members live in the same area, they all feel the pressure of neighbors' gossip about her appearance. Her story is illustrative of the extent to which diverse appearances of saleswomen are found 'acceptable' in the neighborhood marketplace. While in central marketplaces, the lively and crowded setting seems to open up space for relative diversity in appearances - at least in terms of make up and diverse styles of wearing the headscarf - neighborhood shops require that saleswomen refrain from eye catching appearances. These shops do not exclusively employ women with the headscarf, there are unveiled women working in these settings as well. However, it was made clear to us by saleswomen in different cities that one would have to abide by certain codes of modesty with regard to appearance and attitude in order to have a 'stable' and peaceful working life in these working environments. Wearing short skirts, low-cut blouses and displaying 'loose' attitudes in the presence of males were particularly referred to as reasons that would lead to a bad reputation and could result in losing the job.

Despite the nuances, shops in central marketplaces and small neighborhoods have common aspects. Most importantly, both kinds of shops were usually well rooted in their settings; that is to say, they had been there for a long time, had well established relations with the neighborhood or with the owners and employees of the shops around. What this means for the saleswomen is a working setting with close relations, providing a sense of security and protection as well as

a sense of control and monitoring. Besides these aspects, in both kinds of settings, communication with the customers is informal, and probably the most indispensable skill for saleswomen is developing and/or maintaining rapport with the customers.

4.1.3. *Tesettür* Chain Stores

Tesettür chain stores are included in this chapter as one category of retail spaces in which the respondents of the research are employed. The *tesettür* market initially set out as small scale retailers aiming to meet the clothing requirements of an anonymous 'pious woman', with a strong reference to the religious meanings of covering (Kılıçbay & Binark, 2002; Sandıkçı & Ger, 2007). Yet today most have become large scale retailers, utilizing modern ways of attracting and addressing to consumers, highlighting fashionable images in their advertisements (Sandıkçı & Ger, 2007), standardizing the work flow and the communication in the stores according to Western standards, and seeking ways to globalize their trademark. Therefore they complicate the dichotomous distinctions drawn between large and small scale retailers.

During the fieldwork, we visited the stores of Tekbir[58] and Setrms. These two *tesettür* brands are among the most prominent brands that sell *tesettür* clothing in Turkey. The concept of '*tesettür* store' has become popular especially

[58] Among the *tesettür* chain stores, Tekbir Giyim is undoubtedly the most prominent one. It has been subject of many scholarly studies. For detailed analyses about 'Tekbir' and its pioneering role in the popularization of veiling as a 'fashion' as well as the advent of Islamic consumerism in Turkey, see Navaro-Yashin (2002); Sandıkçı and Ger (2007; 2010); Gökarıksel and Secor (2009).

following the emergence of the brand of Tekbir, which has a relatively well-to-do client base. It has been suggested that the advent and the popularity of Tekbir stores, as well as many similar '*tesettür* stores' is closely related to the flourishing of an Islamic bourgeoisie (Navaro-Yashin, 2002; Sandıkçı & Ger, 2007). Having been established in 1990, Tekbir has 45 stores in 24 cities[59] of Turkey and franchises in 14 countries. The prices are more expensive than the prices of shops in small neighborhoods or central bazaars. Tekbir is especially famous for the fashion shows it has been organizing since 1992 and the claim to popularize and disseminate *tesettür* clothing through the appeals of fashion (Kılıçbay & Binark, 2002) among the women of Turkey, as well as abroad (Navaro Yashin, 2002: 96). Unlike Tekbir, Setrms is an Ankara based company and has no stores in İstanbul. There are four Setrms stores in Ankara and four stores in four cities: Malatya, Konya, Kayseri and İzmir. The company has changed its name from 'Setre' to 'Setrms', a twist that gives the brand name a foreign sound.

Tekbir stores are situated on busy boulevards, streets and shopping districts in the cities as 'street stores'. On the other hand, it is possible to find Setrms stores in two shopping malls in Ankara besides in shopping districts as street stores. Unlike most of the other shopping settings where the respondents of the research work, the air in the Tekbir and Setrms stores is climatized, and it is relatively quiet inside; hence not only the humidity, but also the noise and texture

[59] Tekbir is an Istanbul based company. 19 of the Tekbir stores are in Istanbul. The number of the stores have been checked as of February 2011. www.tekbirgiyim.com.tr

of the street is left out. The stores are spacious and carefully decorated, with light colors and shiny looking surfaces.

The products sold in Tekbir and Setrms meet all the clothing needs of women who dress according to *tesettür*, such as long and usually loose skirts, trousers, tunics covering the hips, overcoats and headscarves of various designs and color. Yet many of those products also potentially appeal to women without *tesettür* as well. During the fieldwork, it was possible to see a few potential customers without the headscarf, scanning through the trousers or tunics. Tekbir also has a men's collection and employs salesmen in the men's department. Both Tekbir and Setrms utilize modern methods of providing customer loyalty; both brands offer 'store cards' and special discounts to their customers. Unlike small scale retailers, prices in Tekbir and Setrems are standardized and non-negotiable. In some stores of Tekbir, such as the one in Ulus, Ankara, there are sections specially allocated for products from the previous season with discounted prices.

Regarding the appearances of saleswomen, the first point to emphasize is that, Tekbir employs only saleswomen wearing the headscarf. The male manager of one Tekbir store, who asked to remain anonymous, underlined that they preferred to employ women with headscarves exclusively and formulated this preference in terms of a mission to provide employment for these women. He claimed that women with headscarves are rejected by many employers, hence they are being deprived of the opportunity to gain experience and enter the retail labor market. Tekbir was following the opposite policy in order to provide these women with the opportunities that they lacked due to their headscarf. Setrms also prefers

saleswomen with headscarves; still we met one Setrms saleswoman without the headscarf as well. Tekbir pursues a policy of uniform clothing: Saleswomen wear grey trousers, uniform headscarves and long grey overcoats that look stylish and fit well on the waist. The top managers of the stores are usually men. Yet, there is a ranking among saleswomen as well, some apparently more experienced saleswomen have been assigned the task of managing junior ones. These more senior saleswomen sometimes give directions to the others. The organization of the work routine seems to be well designed: In larger, multi-storey stores, one or two saleswomen are assigned to each floor and the products always seem to be neatly organized.

The communication between saleswomen and customers, as well as among co-workers, is formal unlike the shops in central marketplaces and small shops. Every saleswoman calls each other and the customers as 'madam' and 'sir' (hanımefendi, beyefendi) instead of informal ways of addressing. The saleswomen are attentive but only as long as the customer wants attention; they do not use hard-sell methods. Yet, when asked for their help, they are quite helpful, attentive and professional. Gökarıksel and Secor (2009) note that in Tekbir stores, the sales performance of saleswomen is rated on a whiteboard in the eating and resting area (p.13). This performance rating system also indicates professional standards of working in Tekbir stores. The saleswomen in Tekbir and Setrms earn at least the minimum wage, which was approximately 500 Turkish liras (US$ 350) in 2009 and 620 Turkish liras (US$ 387) in 2011. There are prospects for promotion and pay raise: One respondent, a 30 year old university graduate

working as a senior saleswoman in a Tekbir store told us that her wage was 975 Turkish liras (US$ 600 approximately as of 2009). Tekbir and Setrms provide social security to their workers, which makes them different from some small scale retailers.

It should be emphasized that working as insured employees for a nationally recognized brand with a standardized work routine provides the saleswomen with a more 'professional' identity which makes them establish a relatively strong belonging to the company when compared to saleswomen working in small scale retailers. The saleswomen working in Tekbir and Setrms tend to underline the distinction of working in these stores and small scale, less institutionalized retailers. They also drew distinctions from saleswomen working in small scale retailers. In a Tekbir store in Ankara, Ulus, upon our explanation of the research, the saleswomen were quite displeased to hear that we visited the nearby Çıkrıkçılar Bazaar and Anafartalar Bazaar in order to ask the same questions to the headscarved saleswomen in those marketplaces. Their discontent was rooted in their belief that we could be getting "wrong impressions" about women with headscarves when we talked to the saleswomen who worked in those more humble working settings and who, according to them, were not qualified enough to represent the Tekbir women or women wearing headscarves.

4.2. Socio-demographic Characteristics

During the fieldwork, a brief questionnaire was applied to the respondents of the research following the focus groups and in-depth interviews in order to get

demographic information. It was not possible to apply the questionnaires to the respondents of the informal interviews due to time pressure; as these interviews were conducted within the shops, during the heavy working routine of the saleswomen. This chapter details the demographic information gathered from the respondents of focus groups and in-depth interviews. In total, 86 questionnaires were collected from the respondents; 30 of these respondents were in Istanbul, 14 in Ankara, 16 in Denizli, 17 in Kayseri and 9 in Gaziantep.

The majority of the 86 respondents who filled out the questionnaires work in small scale shops in central marketplaces. While 43 respondents work in such marketplaces, 28 work in small scale neighborhood shops and six work in Tekbir stores. The distribution according to cities is as indicated in Table 4:

Table 4: City/working setting

	Small scale shop in central marketplace	Small scale neighborhood shop	*Tesettür* chain store	Unknown
İstanbul	13	16	-	1
Ankara	9	2	3	
Denizli	7	3	3	3
Kayseri	10	2	-	5
Gaziantep	4	5	-	

A clear majority of the respondents sell clothing and shoes. The clothing category includes women's clothing, children's clothing and lingerie. The other

categories of merchandise are as follows: Jewellery, mobile phones and computers, pastry, household appliances and furniture and home textile.

Table 5: Kind of merchandise sold

Clothing / leather / shoes	47
Household appliances/ furniture	7
Pastry shop / ready-to-eat	6
Jewellery/drapery/ornaments	5
Small market	4
Home textile	3
Electronics (mobile phones, computers)	2
Other	4
Unknown	8

4.2.1. Age

The youngest respondent of the research was 16 years old, and the oldest was 49 years old at the time of the fieldwork. The majority of the respondents are clustered in the age groups 20-25 and 26-40.

Table 6: Age

16-19 yrs.	13
20-25 yrs.	28
26-40 yrs.	39
41 + yrs.	6

There are only six respondents older than 40 years old. One of them is divorced and has to provide for herself and her two children, who are also looking for jobs. Among the other five married women older than 40 years old, three of them are working due to severe financial difficulties in the household: One of them is the only breadwinner in the family, as her husband has been out of work for more than 20 years. Another one started working as a saleswoman after 21 years of being a housewife because of financial problems. Two live in İstanbul, two in Ankara and two in Denizli.

The youngest group of respondents between 16 and 19 years old consists of thirteen women. Four of them live in Kayseri, four in Gaziantep, one in Denizli and four in Istanbul. The ones living in Gaziantep, Kayseri and Denizli are all either primary school graduates who did not attempt to attend high school, or high school drop-outs. Like the respondents in the 41 + age category, their stories about why they started to work are mostly related to the absolute necessity to provide for their families. Especially in Gaziantep, many respondents in different age groups mentioned that a lot of men were unemployed for at least a few months of the year, especially those working in the garment ateliers. The youngest respondents' stories of dropping out of school in Kayseri, Gaziantep and Denizli also referred to the employment problems of fathers, and the responsibility to earn money. The four respondents in 16-19 age category in Istanbul are different in terms of their educational standing. One of them is a high school graduate who recently started to work as a saleswoman. She voiced her aspiration to attend university, as well as her reluctance to take off her headscarf or resort to wearing a

wig for the sake of university education[60]. The other three are all continuing their education through distant education; two are attending high school and one is attending university.

4.2.2. Marital Status

Among the respondents of the research, 39 are married and 47 are single. All of the respondents between the ages of 16 and 19 are single. In the age group 19-25, eleven are married and 17 are single. Among those between 26 and 40 years old, 23 are married and 16 are single. Among the oldest respondent group, 5 are married and one of them is single, but has been married once.

Table 7: Age / marriage

	Married	Single
16-19 yrs.	-	13
20-25 yrs.	11	17
26-40 yrs.	23	16
41 +	5	1

One major difference among married and single women is related to their ideas about working after getting married. Especially in Gaziantep and Kayseri, single women in the younger age groups were much more reluctant to work if

[60] During the time when the major part of the fieldwork was conducted, the headscarf ban in universities was valid. For a brief history of the headscarf ban, see Ch.2 of the dissertation.

they got married, even though their narratives were mostly full of favorable expressions about working outside home. It was very commonly expressed that by working they felt more self-confident as they found the opportunity to meet different people, learn new ways of coping with the world, etc. Still, there was a tendency to imagine themselves as housewives after getting married, accompanied with projections of an idealized marriage in which they would be free of financial problems and live in welfare as the 'ladies of their houses'. Therefore, they envisioned their experience as young working women and their responsibility to shoulder their families' needs only as a temporary one. Unlike in Gaziantep and Kayseri, most single respondents in İstanbuTable l and Ankara were not wishing to quit working outside home after marriage. This might be related to the fact that among the single respondents in these cities, most of them came from families of relatively better financial conditions. They could spare some money for the leisurely activities that urban life offered to young people in Istanbul and Ankara.

Among the married respondents, especially those in the age group 26-40, it was common to start working after children were raised at least up to the age of kindergarten or elementary school. While this was the common tendency in all of the five cities we visited, the motivations of starting or going back to work varied.

Especially in Gaziantep and Denizli, some of the married respondents were under the burden of providing for their family alone, at least in some months of the year, as their husbands were irregularly employed in the garment industry. To these respondents, the idealized imagination of marriage among young single women was an unrealistic phantasy. Particularly in the focus groups with married

women in Gaziantep, this idea was fervently challenged by the respondents who underlined how misleading it was to idealize marriage and how marriages can be ruined due to financial problems. In Gaziantep and Denizli, some of the married women mentioned that they would prefer working at home, doing piecework such as breaking pistachios in Gaziantep, but this kind of piecework paid very poorly, around 5-10 TL's a day. Besides, it was rendered unnecessary by machines nowadays. In Istanbul, among the married respondents there were relatively less women who mentioned financial difficulties as their motivation to work. Instead, the motivation to go out of the house and earn money 'to stand on one's own feet', 'to prepare a better future for the children' was far more predominant.

4.2.3. Education

The largest group of respondents is high school graduates. Among 33 high school graduates, five are graduates of İmam Hatip Schools. There are 21 respondents with eight years of schooling, that is, who are either graduates of middle schools or 8-year elementary schools, and 12 respondents who graduated from 5-year elementary schools[61]. Five of the 8-year elementary school graduates are drop-outs from high school. Among the three respondents without a degree, one was a 25-year old elementary school drop-out from Gaziantep, who got married when she was 15. The second one was a single 19 year old woman from

[61] A law replacing 5-year elementary schools with 8-year elementary schools was passed in 1997.

Gaziantep, who had to drop out of elementary school after her father was imprisoned. The third one was a 40 year old woman from Denizli.

Table 8: Education

No degree	3
Elementary school (5 year)	12
Elementary school (8 year) / middle school	21 (five high-school drop-outs, one in high school through distant education)
High school	33 (five of them are graduates of İmam Hatip Schools)
Associate degree	4
University student	6 (all five of them are attending Open Education Faculty)
University graduate	7

There are six university students among the respondents. They were all enrolled in the Open Education Faculty. One of the respondents from Istanbul was a particularly ambitious young woman. She was a single, 31 year old woman working in a small market in the small neighborhood, Çıksalın. Her father did not allow her to continue her education after elementary school. Instead, she was sent to Koran course for two years, and then courses teaching needlework and embroidery. At the age of 20, she decided to get all the degrees she could, and completed middle school and high school by distant education. In the university entrance exam, she could not enter a university in Istanbul so she decided on the

Open Education Faculty. The other university students chose Open Education Faculty in order to be able to continue working.

Among the respondents who graduated from university, two respondents declared that they did not consider sales jobs as a permanent career: One 23 year old respondent from Kayseri was trying to find a job in a bank and emphasized that her chances of employment are very limited as long as she wears the headscarf. Another young woman from Ankara aims to start her own boutique, so she works in a clothing shop to learn the business. Four respondents, who are older than the above mentioned respondents, are women who started to work in older ages, out of their dissatisfaction with years spent as housewives. One of them was working in her father-in-law's store. These four respondents did not think of building long term careers in working life, and hence were not dissatisfied with sales jobs. Finally, one university graduate respondent works as a senior saleswoman in a Tekbir store in Ankara. She has been working in Tekbir for six years and she is the only respondent with a university education who tends to think of retail work as a potential long-term career.

It is orderly to note at this point that Tekbir stores employ relatively more educated saleswomen compared to small shops in central marketplaces and small neighborhoods. Among the six respondents working in Tekbir stores, there was one university graduate, one respondent with an associate degree as a textile technician, and four high-school graduates, one being an İmam Hatip graduate.

One of the most remarkable findings during the fieldwork concerns the respondents' strong appreciation and enthusiasm about university education.

Women of older age groups in all cities expressed their aspiration to see their daughters graduate from university. In the respondents' narratives, the predominant appeal of a university degree was the status and prestige that entitlement to a professional occupation would provide a woman with. Being a lawyer, a doctor or a teacher was typically described as 'clean' jobs. Especially teaching was underlined as the most convenient job, because the respondents idealized a working life that would not contradict with domestic gender roles. Presumably, being a teacher would leave time for housework due to shorter working hours.

While the older age groups and married women tended to voice aspirations for their daughters, the single respondents, particularly high school graduates in the age group 19-25, were more likely to express subtle frustration about not being able to attend university. Especially the single, high-school graduate respondents living in İstanbul and Ankara tended to express resentment about the headscarf ban in the universities. This issue was fervently discussed in the group of single women in the focus groups in Ankara and İstanbul in 2009. One predominant tendency was to feel discouraged by the headscarf ban in the university and in public sector jobs: Some of them did not even attempt to take the university entrance exam. According to their own narratives, they were discouraged because even though they could uncover or wear a wig during university, still they would suffer the consequences of the headscarf after university as their employment opportunities would be limited. The graduates of İmam Hatip Schools were more particular about their frustration, due to the

reduction of their grades in the university entrance exams unless they opted for a Faculty of Theology. One İmam Hatip graduate in Ankara who was working in a Tekbir store told us that she abandoned the Open Education Faculty because she could not put up with the obligation to take off her headscarf during the faculty exams.

Single young women working due to financial difficulties, and elementary school graduates considered university education as the most ideal, yet distant, aspiration. They did not relate their reasons of dropping out of the education system to the headscarf ban. Their stories mostly referred to financial difficulties in the household and the obligation to work. More rarely did the narratives refer to the patriarchal obstacles set by the fathers against schooling of girls.

4.2.4. Income

When it comes to the monthly income earned by the respondents, it is significant to note that an overwhelming majority earns the minimum wage or less[62]. Among these 42 respondents, 30 live in Gaziantep, Kayseri and Denizli, which shows that saleswomen in Ankara and Istanbul earn higher wages, as might be expected. In Istanbul, there are eight respondents in this least earning group, and seven of them work in small neighborhood shops, demonstrating that the

[62] In the second half of 2009, the net minimum wage was 496 TLs, which corresponds to 350 $ approximately. In the first half of 2012 when I conducted a focus group on my own behalf, the net minimum wage was 701,14 TLs; approximately 391 $ as of January 2012.

central marketplaces tend to pay more than small neighborhood shops in Istanbul. Yet in Gaziantep, Kayseri and Denizli such a clear difference cannot be observed.

Table 9: Income

300 – minimum wage	42
More than minimum wage – 800	16
More than 800- 1000 TL	18
More than 1000 TL	3
No wage (working in husband's or father's shop)	2
No answer	5

Table 10: Income / city

	İstanbul	Ankara	Kayseri	Denizli	G.antep
300 – minimum wage	8	4	11	10	9
More than minimum wage – 800	11	2	2	1	-
More than 800- 1000 TL	8	5	2	3	-
1000 TL+	1	2	-	-	-

Regardless of income, most participants avoided framing their earnings as a way of empowerment in relations with husbands or parents. The single women,

especially in İstanbul and Ankara, a majority of whom underlined that they were not working out of financial necessity, mentioned their income as almost a sort of 'pin money': They would contribute to the house if necessary, but this would not bring the liberty to assert demands, such as spending leisure time out of the house more than before. This was also true for single women who provided an essential amount of the household income. Among married women, although marriage was not necessarily regarded as an affair of harmony and stability, there was still the tendency to avoid relating women's power in the marriage to their income. Instead, power relations and domination in marriage were framed merely as matters of 'personality' and 'character'. Accordingly, women also did not seem to consider their income as essential but as a contribution that their family could have managed without.

CHAPTER 5

DEMARCATION LINES IN RETAIL EMPLOYMENT AND THE EXCLUSION OF THE HEADSCARF

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the patterns of how women with headscarves are excluded from employment in certain portions of the labor market. It reveals the exclusionary practices in the private sector labor market; a realm that has been overshadowed by the dominant scholarly focus on the exclusion of the headscarf from state monitored public sphere. The chapter suggests explanations about the reasons of this exclusion. More importantly, it looks into the intersecting discourses through which especially lower middle class women with headscarves are constructed as a specific type of labor force.

While conducting research on the roles and meanings of the headscarf in the lives of women working in retail jobs, it was striking to observe a demarcation among shopping settings on the base of employing or not employing women with headscarves, and a consequent clustering of saleswomen with headscarves in

small scale retailing spaces or *tesettür* chain stores. The shopping malls and large scale retailers such as chain stores selling internationally or nationally well known brands, usually do not prefer to employ women with headscarves in sales positions. This includes malls and large scale retailers which have many customers with headscarves as well. In small scale retailers, it is often harder to find secure and formal, hence relatively more permanent employment. Sales jobs in small scale retailers are more likely to be uninsured, dead end and temporary[63].

This chapter looks into the patterns and mechanisms through which such demarcation and clustering occurs. In the previous chapter, I delineated the web of social relations that the participants of this research inhabit in the shopping settings where they are employed, and pointed out how those shopping settings are differentiated from each other, as well as from shopping malls, where they are not employed. In this chapter, the objectives are, first, to lay out the structure of exclusion confronted by women with headscarves in the retail sales jobs. What defines the retail spaces which exclude or include women with headscarves? What are the 'norms' in some retail spaces that leave women with headscarves out? What are the differences between the working conditions in the workplaces where women with headscarves are and are not employed? The second objective is to look into the different layers of the discourse by which the exclusionary employment policies are explained, especially through the employers'

[63] Small scale retailer refers to family-owned, independent shops which are active in a single location. Large scale retailer refers to multiple location stores with central control, and the ability to change location or even develop new products in response to changing conditions (Tokatlı and Boyacı, 1998).

perspective, and analyse the implications of these 'justifications' with regard to the connotations loaded on the headscarf.

In this chapter, I first argue that the norms according to which the headscarf is judged and excluded should be analysed by taking into account the class position and level of cultural capital[64] of the woman wearing it. Sales jobs do not require a university degree, and they have been recruiting employees from among lower-middle class women since the birth of modern retailing (Benson, 1986). Most participants of this research fit into this profile[65]. In previous studies, it has been argued that the headscarf is stigmatized because of its visualization of "undesired differentness of being a Muslim" (Göle, 2003: 811), or because it is marked as "the symbol of the Islamist threat against the secular regime and modern lifestyles" (Sandikci and Ger, 2010: 19). This line of argumentation emphasizes the common connotations of 'Islamic difference' that the headscarf is argued to visualize, and seeks the roots of exclusionary practices within the framework of the exclusion and stigmatization of Islamic difference vis a vis secular lifestyle. However, this framework disregards the class cleavages among women wearing headscarves, and the different types of exclusion in different contexts. This chapter argues that there are different types of exclusion contingent

[64] The concept of 'cultural capital' is employed here in the Bourdieun sense to connote the embodied and institutionalized forms of cultural capital. Embodied form of cultural capital refers to dispositions of the mind and body, underlining the unconscious processes of socialization and inheritance. Yet, it can be acquired as well as inherited, through personal investment of the individual. 'Taste' and 'style' are closely related to one's embodied cultural capital. Institutionalized cultural capital refers to academic qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986).
[65] For detailed demographic information on the participants, see Chapter 4.

upon the context and upon the class position of a woman with headscarf. In other words, a middle class or an upper middle class woman with a higher level of cultural capital is not excluded in the same way, and for the exact same reasons as a lower middle class, less educated woman.

The second main argument of the chapter concerns the ways in which the 'difference' displayed by the headscarf plays out in the private sector labor market for sales jobs. The connotations of the headscarf are contextualized within the private sector retail labor market in order to understand why the headscarf connotes a 'difference' that remains out of the norms of normalcy in certain portions of this labor market. The chapter is sensitive to the norms in retail sector that label as 'unfit' not only women with headscarves, but also other individuals who bear signs of ethnic, religious, cultural, class based, sexual, bodily particularities. I argue that the private sector has its own ways of excluding difference, and this exclusion is legitimized through a managerial discourse defending the 'privacy' of the workplace, the right to uphold a brand image, and the untouchability of the decision to employ or not employ a person. This managerial discourse portrays the headscarf as the indicator of a fixed and stable identity, and assigns the woman wearing it to jobs catering to consumers who are supposed to share that identity. Women with headscarves are constituted as a specific type of labor force; a labor force that is in better harmony with the social environment of small, local shops; a labor force that is more 'fit' to be employed in less secure, less standardized, less gainful jobs. More importantly, the idea of the employers' right to decide who to employ, which remains politically and

legally uncontested, results in discriminatory employment policies that discriminate not only against women with headscarves, but against anyone who bears tangible signs of ethnic, cultural, bodily, sexual, class based particularities perceived by the employer to be 'unfit' to the image of the store.

Third, the chapter maintains that the line of argumentation analyzing the exclusionary practices in the state monitored public sphere falls short of addressing the exclusion of the headscarf from certain portions of the private sector labor market. The exclusion in the state monitored public sphere is political, thus politically contestable. While I was writing this dissertation, first the headscarf ban in universities, then the ban in public sector employment were abolished. However, I suggest that the exclusion in the private sector labor market is more resilient because it is legitimized and normalized through the employers' right to choose employees according to vague and arbitrary norms of 'fitting in' a certain workplace. This kind of exclusion is hard to put a finger on because of its vagueness. Moreover, it is naturalized and located out of the realm of political contestation, thus much more difficult to struggle against.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: First, the retail settings in which women with headscarves are employed in or excluded from, are laid out. Second, the distinctions between these retail settings are described in thorough detail. Third, the norms of presentability that are very salient in sales jobs, are delineated in depth , with special focus on the ways in which they exclude those who do not 'fit in'. Last but not the least, the multilayered dynamics of exclusion that women

with headscarves experience, are analyzed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings.

5.2. Demarcation Lines in Retail Employment

This chapter takes its cue from the observation during the fieldwork which revelaed one seldom encounters women with headscarves in sales jobs in certain shopping settings, such as shopping malls, and chain stores selling internationally and nationally well known brands. On the other hand, one could find many saleswomen with headscarves in small scale retailers, that is, single shops owned by individuals. These small scale retailers which employ saleswomen with headscarves could most typically be found in localities such as central marketplaces, and some small neighborhoods, as explained in detail in the previous chapter.

In her study on veiling in İstanbul, Secor (2002) argues that in this city, there are "different, spatially realized sets of hegemonic rules and norms regarding women's veiling, which are themselves produced by specific constellations of power" (p.8), which she refers to as "regimes of veiling". Accordingly, different 'regimes of veiling' may constrain the mobility of women with headscarves in some districts of İstanbul both formally and informally, while facilitating their mobility in other districts.

The concept of 'regimes of veiling' is relevant to the demarcation in the case of retail employment. Yet, in this particular context, there are specific 'constellations of power' at work, which exert influence on women with

headscarves both with regard to urban space, and also with regard to exclusionary images and norms promoted by retail settings. As Secor (2002) already points out, there are "hegemonic rules and norms regarding veiling or not veiling that characterize particular spaces" (p.19) in the city. Indeed, whether a woman with a headscarf will be employed in a certain store partly depends on which district the store is located in. However, in the case of retail employment, what more strongly defines the 'regimes of veiling' is related to the images that certain stores aim to convey, and whether a woman with a headscarf 'fits' this image. The 'images' against which saleswomen are judged, tend to shift according to whether it is a large, centralized chain store, a store in a shopping mall, or a small, individually owned store located on a street; as well as whether the shop is selling well known brands or not. The spatial dimension is more ambiguous as the spatial boundaries in the city tend to be porous and shift continuously. Yet, the boundary between the types of retailers which do and do not employ women with headscarves is more definable and resilient.

In all the five cities where the fieldwork was conducted, the research participants very often named specific districts of their cities where they could not be employed due to the headscarf. The most salient term employed to define these districts, was 'elite'. Many participants with headscarves claimed that they would not be given sales jobs in 'elite districts', or 'high society districts'. However, what they meant by 'elite' did not have a uniform connotation. Whereas the definitions usually overlapped with class distinctions, there were subtle variations depending on the differences among the cities and the particular experiences of

the respondents. For example, in the focus groups conducted in Kayseri and Gaziantep, the respondents connected 'eliteness' to being higher up government employees, and accordingly the elite districts were defined on the base of being preferred by these government employees, either to live or to shop. Even though Kayseri is known for the accumulation of private capital, according to some respondents in this city, the status provided by the state outweighed the resources gained through private business[66]. Hence the definition of government employees as 'the elite segment'. In Ankara, the participants of a focus group conducted in 2009 specifically referred to Sihhiye[67] as the district that draws the line of demarcation. They also emphasized that this boundary has been shifting towards Kızılay, which is argued to be 'the center' of the city (Çınar, 2007). According to the focus group participants, in the previous years the clientele of Kızılay's retailers had changed from the 'elite' to a population of more humble background. Therefore, they argued, employers who used to reject women with headscarves were changing this attitude. In İstanbul, in a focus group conducted on the Anatolian side of the city, participants named especially Bağdat Street, in which

[66] In a recent study, Aksit et.al. (2012) explain in detail the social history of the predominance of private entrepreneurship in Kayseri, and argue that in this city, being a public officer is not preferred much, let alone idealized (p.118). Yet, the respondents in Aksit et. al's research, are mostly men. It is possible to argue that there may be a gendered difference regarding the views on public sector jobs. During the research for this dissertation, it frequently came to my attention that women are inclined to idealize public sector jobs for providing them with both higher status than private sector jobs, and the leisure time they need to fulfill domestic roles.

[67] Sıhhiye is a district close to the Kızılay Square. It is between the municipality of Çankaya, home to the wealthy neighborhoods such as Bahçelievler, Gaziosmanpaşa, and luxurious shopping venues such as Tunalı Hilmi street in the east, and the municipality of Yenimahalle in the west, which includes the squatter housing areas such as Şentepe (see Armatlı Köroğlu and Yalçıner Coşkun, 2006).

stores selling upscale brands such as Vakko, Louis Vuitton, Burberry's are located, as the district in which women with headscarves would not be employed. In the focus group conducted on the European side of the city, the participants named the shopping venues catering to wealthy customers, such as Nişantaşı and Etiler as the districts where they would not find sales jobs with their headscarves on.

Whereas very upscale shopping venues such as Nişantaşı, Etiler and Bağdat Street are districts where it is almost impossible to see saleswomen with headscarves, the demarcation lines were not as rigid in every district. For example, in districts where both middle and lower middle class people shop, such as the marketplaces located in the center of Maltepe, Pendik, Üsküdar, Ümraniye, Fındıkzade in İstanbul; Ulus in Ankara, Gaziler Street in Gaziantep, and Kaleiçi Bazaar in Denizli, there were many saleswomen working with their headscarves along with saleswomen without headscarves. Yet, the demarcation line is much less transitional and much more rigid when it comes to different types of retailers. As I emphazised in the previous chapter, shopping malls are the shopping settings in which it is very unlikely to see saleswomen with headscarves. Shopping malls, more often than not, host the stores of large scale retailers, that is, chain stores with central control (Tokatlı and Boyacı, 1998) and a designated brand image. Such stores refrain from employing women with headscarves in sales positions. Women with headscarves can hold sales positions in shopping malls, if at all, as saleswomen working in kiosks. These kiosks are counters in the middle of halls in shopping malls, selling candies, snacks, or in some cases, scarves. For example,

during the fieldwork in 2009 in İstanbul, we came across one saleswoman with headscarf in Cevahir Shopping Mall in Şişli. As the only saleswoman with a headscarf in this enormous mall, she was selling scarves in a kiosk which obviously was catering mostly to women with headscarves. This saleswoman gave us the information that the shopping mall administration initially objected to her presence in the mall, and it took six months for her employer to convince the administration. The manager of a shopping mall in Maltepe, İstanbul, told me that in this shopping mall, a woman with a headscarf would not be employed as a saleswoman, unless she agreed to take off her scarf.

Besides stores in shopping malls, stores of large scale retailers located in street bazaars also do not employ women with headscarves. During months of observation in shopping settings, it was almost impossible to see saleswomen with headscarves in large scale retailing stores, other than *tesettür* stores. In two in depth and several short interviews with people in employer positions in large scale retailers made it clear to me that in these stores and malls, women with headscarves would not be employed as saleswomen. In order to understand the exact process of applying for jobs in large scale retailers, as a part of my fieldwork, I visited the branches of some large scale retailers located in Maltepe[68],

[68] Maltepe is a district in the Anatolian side of Istanbul, which is home to lower middle class neighborhoods such as Zumrutevler, Gulensu, Gulsuyu; as well as middle class housing close to the sea side, and newly built gated communities. The street stores in the Maltepe Bazaar reflect this mixed class setting. There are both large scale retailers and small scale, individually owned shops. Many saleswomen with headscarves work in this bazaar, yet they are employed only in small scale shops. The bazaar is a fertile setting in terms of visualizing the demarcation between large and small scale retailers with regard to employing women with headscarves.

İstanbul in 2012. I chose the stores which announced in their windows that they had open sales positions. I asked the store managers how a person could apply to these positions. In all the stores, the applicants needed to fill out forms with questions of basic information. However, all the branch managers emphasized that the information given in the form, was much less important than seeing the applicant in person. They made it clear that they had to see whether the applicant looks fashionable and presentable, whether she is overweight or slim, whether she speaks without accent. Many branch managers also clearly expressed that a woman with a headscarf would not be employed, so she should not even bother to fill out a form, if she does not have an intention to take it off. For example, one woman interviewee in İstanbul who was managing a branch of one domestic large scale retailer selling clothing items catering mostly to young, middle class shoppers made it clear to me that it was against corporate employment policy to employ a saleswoman with a headscarf. She also told me that she herself wanted to cover her hair from time to time, but she would have to quit in order to do that. Another interviewee, a shopping mall manager, asserted that in his 35 year long career as a manager in clothing retail, he knew of no large scale clothing retailer except for *tesettür* stores that would employ saleswomen with headscarves. Both managers were managing shopping settings where a substansive amount of customers were wearing the headscarf.

The narratives of the saleswomen who participated the research from all five cities where the research was conducted, were permeated with experiences of being refused by large scale retailing stores, both inside and outside shopping

malls. These experiences clearly show that the headscarf is the cause of the refusal. For instance, one interviewee working in a small stationary shop in İstanbul, explained that before this job, she applied to various sales jobs only to hear statements of rejection such as "We need more presentable employees". As a woman who cares very much about the way she dresses, she expressed that she did not buy into the 'excuse' of presentability:

> When you are wearing a headscarf, no matter how neatly you dress, how elegant you look, the headscarf makes you convey a modest image. After all, this is like a label, and maybe those people do not want that label on themselves. (In-depth interview, İstanbul, February 13, 2009)

Another participant working in a small shop selling overcoats in Pendik, İstanbul, told about her experience of applying to a sales job in a well known cosmetics chain store. The branch manager of the cosmetics store made it clear to her that she had to take off her headscarf in order to work for that brand. When I asked about the possible reasons of this attitude, the participant said:

> They want the saleswomen to wear heavy make-up. Actually I can wear make up, no problem. But still, there is a certain appearance, which I cannot adopt. We (meaning women with headscarves) do not attract the kind of attention they require. Employers in shopping malls think that the headscarf draws a boundary. They think we cannot transcend that boundary. Actually, if they want to make me a decorative doll, I really do have a boundary against that. (Focus group, İstanbul, January 26, 2012)

Even women who did not experience rejection themselves, talked at length about how discouraged they were from applying to large scale retailers and shopping malls. For instance, a saleswoman working in a Tekbir store in Denizli, argued that it was pointless to even fill out an application form in a large scale retailer when it was so clear that she would be humiliated due to the headscarf.

The narratives about being refused by large scale retailers, and the discouragement that these experiences generate, came up very frequently in various focus group discussions and interviews in all five cities. These narratives point out that either by personal experience or by learning about others' experiences, women with headscarves have gained a clear conception of the demarcation lines in the retail sector.

5.2.1. Shopping Malls, Large Scale Retailers and Small Scale Retailers

At this point, it is necessary to point out the distinctions between small scale and large scale retailers in order to capture what the demarcation lines in the retail sector connote and to which socially charged distinctions they correspond. In their analysis of the transformation of retailers in Turkey, Tokatlı and Boyacı (1998) emphasize that large scale retailers are initiated by renowned domestic corporations, international retailers or successful domestic traders. Accordingly, these large scale retailers have started to dominate the retailing landscapes in Turkey since the 1990's, diminishing the market share of small scale retailers and changing the fragmented retail structure in the country. This transformation to large scale retailing has gone hand in hand with the rise of the shopping mall as a new shopping setting (Tokatlı and Boyacı, 1998; Erkip, 2003).

The transformation into large scale retailing and the rise of the shopping mall as a new consumption site have had various socially loaded consequences. Besides suggesting a new lifestyle addressing the "modernity requirements" (Erkip, 2003: 1074) of urban consumers, it has been argued that shopping malls

produce globalization through innovative interactions with their neighborhoods (Helvacıoğlu, 2000). The "modernity requirements" mentioned by Erkip (2003) cover a wide range of consumer demands such as the possibility to consume new and different lifestyle choices and identity components; shopping in a controlled and sterile environment as opposed to the difficulties of coping with the inconveniences of other public spaces, such as traffic jam, and chaotic streets. Tutalar (2007) argues that a modern outlook is obtained in shopping malls through the use of space, light, air conditioning and an over-clean and shiny appearance.

Shopping malls provide saleswomen with an elevated status when compared to small scale retailers. This increase in status has both gender and class dimensions. The 'salesclerk' or 'shopgirl'[69] image, which is argued to carry a degraded connotation (Benson, 1986[70]) turns into the title of 'sales assistant' in shopping malls, highlighting a more neutral position in terms of gender and class (Durakbaşa & Cindoğlu, 2005). It is possible to argue that this transformation is related to the impersonal and standardized communication with the customers in shopping malls (Tutalar, 2007; Akçaoğlu, 2008), which could be considered within the context of the rationalization and standardization processes involved in the transformation of service work (Ritzer, 1993). This makes it possible for a

[69] The appropriate translation for "shopgirl" in Turkish would be "tezgahtar kız", which has a degrading connotation.

[70] In Susan Porter Benson's study on the social history of retail work in which she focuses on the transformations during the transition to large scale retailing in the US, it is argued that the public nature of stores leads to being exposed and vulnerable to different people. This contradicted the gender ideology in early 20th century US and hence brought a stigma to sales jobs as implying a "low moral state" (Benson, 1986: 135-138). She also argues that "shop girl" implies an inferior class position and poor taste in dress and speech (p.24).

saleswoman to keep herself at a certain distance from the customers. Moreover, the 'secure' and controlled space of shopping malls engenders a special appeal for women, since it is relatively free from sexual harassment when compared to other public spaces in the city (Gökarıksel, 1998; Durakbaşa & Cindoğlu, 2005; Tutalar, 2007). Furthermore, being a 'sales assistant' in a shopping mall, and representing a well- known brand potentially sets a saleswoman on a more equal footing with the customers in terms of class (Durakbaşa & Cindoğlu, 2005; Tutalar, 2007). This is also emphasized in studies about shopping malls and large scale retailers in both Western (Benson, 1986) and non- Western (Abaza, 2001; 2004) contexts.

Besides creating the perception of higher status, sales jobs in large scale retailers and shopping malls provide more standardized working conditions as well. Employers working in large scale retailers and shopping malls have social security and standardized working hours, unlike in small scale retailers. Stores in shopping malls are regularly audited by the Labor Inspection Board of the Ministry of Labor. Shopping malls are open from 10 am to 10 pm, and the working hours are in two shifts, with a lunch break. Some stores also provide 15 minute tea breaks. In large scale retailers, the wages are at least the minimum wage, and there are some prospects for career advancement, such as becoming a store manager, or a district manager.

Small scale retailers, on the other hand, are less likely to insure their employees, and wages, at least for starters, are usually lower than the minimum

wage[71]. In most shops, the employees are expected to open and close the shop, which means a working day of ten to twelve hours. In very busy districts and bazaars, the working hours can strech into the late evening in special times such as the days before religious feasts, when shopping is at its peak. It is possible to take one day off a week at best, and one day off every other week at worst. It is unusual for saleswomen in small scale retailers to go out for lunch, usually they have lunch in a room at the back, or a kitchen. This means taking only 15 to 30 minutes to grab a bite and go back to work. On the positive side, the 'room at the back' also provides a medium to relax once in a while, when there are no customers, whereas in shopping malls the salespeople have to be constantly on their feet.

The issue of working conditions was a very sore issue for many participants of the research. In the focus group consisting of women with headscarves working in small scale retailers in the Anatolian side of İstanbul, this issue came up with particularly intense undertones. Participants talked about how they could not even convince their employers to give a proper lunch break in contrast to their counterparts working in malls. One participant said:

> We are the ones who are oppressed (ezilen biziz), the ones working in little shops. Actually we are real saleswomen, shopping mall saleswomen do not even talk to the customers. But they think they are better than us. (Focus group, İstanbul, January 26, 2012)

[71] During the field study, I visited various small scale retailers in Istanbul in the first half of 2012, and asked the wages for new employees. The answers were approximately around 600 – 650 TLs. The net minimum wage in the first half of 2012 was 701 TLs.

In many other focus groups and in depth interviews with saleswomen with headscarves, the differences between working conditions of small and large scale retailers were discussed, with a similar sense of resentment directed against shopping mall and chain store employees. Participants of the research had quite bitter feelings about being constrained into small scale retailers with less favorable working conditions and lower status. The only exception was large scale *tesettür* chain stores such as Tekbir, where it is possible to have social security, at least a minimum wage, standardized working hours, and prospects for career advancement. Therefore, *tesettür* stores happen to be the most attractive retail settings for women with headscarves who work in sales jobs.

5.2.2. Socially Charged Distinctions

The fault lines that socially charge the distinctions between spaces of small and large scale retailing in Turkey goes back in history. Toprak (1995) argues that in Istanbul, a demarcation line was drawn through consumption patterns as early as the 19th century[72]. Accordingly, the districts of Galata and Beyoğlu witnessed the flourishing of Western patterns of consumption through large department stores with branches in different European cities. These department stores addressed especially to non-Muslim consumers. The consumption patterns in the south of the Golden Horn, on the other hand, were defined by traditional bazaars,

[72] For a contending view, see Köse (2009). Yavuz Köse's study on Ottoman department stores argues that some department stores could also be found at the South of Golden Horn, around Eminönü and Sirkeci, and challanges the view that one side of Galata Bridge represented Western modernity while the other side represented traditional consumption.

compiling small shops, such as the Grand Bazaar. While department stores sold a variety of goods for competing prices (Toprak, 1995), the Grand Bazaar operated on principles of the guild system, which banned competition such as price and product diversification, and even signs and name plates attracting attention to shops (Tokman, 2001).

In continuity with this demarcation between Western style department stores and traditional bazaars, shopping malls were initially[73] received in Turkey either as centers symbolizing development, a modern and secular lifestyle, or as sites of Westernized wastefulness. Navaro Yashin (2002) argues that the first malls in Turkey were perceived "through the prism of a polarized politics of culture between secularists and Islamists, as played out in the domain of public life" (p.92). Particularly in early 1990's, when the first shopping malls appeared in Istanbul, they were portrayed by Islamic publications as sites of Westernized extravagance and conspicuous consumption. Navaro Yashin (2002) cites an article published in Milli Gazete[74] in 1994, in which the traditional marketplaces of Istanbul which consist of small scale retailers catering to lower-middle class shoppers, are compared to luxurious shopping malls. The Milli Gazete article claims that there is no trademark fetishism or conspicuous consumption in such shopping settings as opposed to the wastefulness experienced in shopping malls (p.90-92). Furthermore, the criticism of shopping malls is accompanied with

[73] The first shopping mall in Turkey was established in 1987 in İstanbul (Galleria) and in 1989 in Ankara (Atakule).

[74] Milli Gazete was known for its support for the Islamist Welfare Party, which was partner to the coalition government between June 1996- June 1997.

nostalgia for the alleged generosity and modesty of both retailers and shoppers in the Ottoman marketplaces. Navaro Yashin (2002) argues that at the same time, shopping malls such as Akmerkez were presented as the symbols of a 'modern and secular' lifestyle by secular media, further ossifying the dichotomous picture within which shopping settings were located (p.90-93). The shopping mall Akmerkez, located in one of the most luxurious and expensive districts of Istanbul, was presented by its managers as a supporter of secularism. For example, as Navaro Yashin reminds, in 1995, portraits of Atatürk were displayed in the hallways of the mall in an apparent gesture against the Welfare Party right before the national elections.

To put in a nutshell, shopping malls and large scale retailing spaces have been juxtaposed against traditional bazaars and small scale retailers; their distinctions being discussed within a polarized framework of modern / Western versus traditional / authentic; secular versus Islamic; global versus local. Indeed, the transformations in the landscapes of consumption since the 1990's are eroding these sharp distinctions at least on the consumer side. One example is the *tesettür* chain stores. They started as small scale retailers yet developed into national brands sold in national chain stores, introducing their products through fashion shows[75]. Moreover, it is hard to overemphasize the accumulation of wealth among

[75] *Tesettür* clothing has been considered as examplifying the transformation of Islamic consumption sites and thus has been subject to many scholarly studies. See Kılıçbay and Binark (2002), Navaro Yashin (2005), Sandıkçı and Ger (2007; 2010), Gökarıksel and Secor (2009). For other changing landscapes of Islamic consumption sites in Turkey, see Bilici (2000), Azak (2000). For a focus on the transformation of Islamic youth in terms of intellectual consumption, see Saktanber (2005). For the rise of Muslim capitalists, see Buğra (2002), Demir et.al.(2004), Çınar

Islamic bourgeoisie, and the concurrently changing consumption patterns of Islamic women, which are argued to indicate the transformation of collective Islamist identity towards individualized identities as consumers (Sandıkçı and Ger, 2007; Gökarıksel and Secor, 2010). There is a convergence between Islamic and secular sites of consumption, as well as the consumption patterns of middle class consumers from Islamic and secular sections of society. However, when it comes to the employment of women with headscarves, there is still a demarcation line. By this, I do not mean sharp spatial distinctions. There are retail settings, especially small scale retailers in central marketplaces of neighborhood bazaars where women with and without headscarves work side by side. Yet, there is a socially charged distinction between the images that shops convey by employing or not employing women with headscarves.

An example of retail settings where women with and without headscarves are both employed, is the Anafartalar Bazaar[76] in Ankara. Aliye[77], a research participant who works in Anafartalar claimed that the employers aim to appeal to both covered and uncovered customers. She pointed out a socially loaded difference between shops located at the entrance floor of the bazaar which employ

(1997), Tuğal (2002). For a more recent analysis of the transformation of Islamism, see Tuğal (2010).

[76] Anafartalar Bazaar is a closed shopping space in Ulus, Ankara, with small scale shops that sell clothing and footwear, as well as wedding gowns. The shops selling wedding gowns are mostly located on the upper floors of the bazaar, which consists of six floors including two basement floors. It dates back to the 1960's, long before the concept of shopping mall became popular in Turkey.

[77] All the names pseudonyms in order to protect the anonymity of research participants.

fewer women with headscarves, and shops of upper floors, where the majority of saleswomen wear the headscarf:

> Aliye: The entrance floor is a little different from the upper floors. The upper floors are… you know, there are those very cosy, warm neighborhoods we see in TV serials… People share each other's problems. The upper floors are just like that. But the entrance floor… How to say… the shops address to the customers who want to buy brands. For example a customer comes to buy a mascara… you cannot give her any brand… It is an obsession, you know… just to show off. But in those shops too, veiled women are being used… We know this.
> - Excuse me, I could not understand, what do you mean"being used"?
> Aliye: Let's say there are 17 saleswomen in a shop. 15 of them are open, 2 are covered… The boss thinks, "well, the customers are those who buy famous brands. So I need more uncovered saleswomen". But then he thinks, "well, I have humble customers from lower class bazaars as well, such as the Çıkrıkçılar Bazaar.
> - Do you mean that only women without headscarves have money?
> Aliye: No no, that is not what I mean. I mean that the boss wants to have different employees to appeal to different kinds of people. (Focus group, Ankara, May 29, 2009)

Aliye's narrative gives a nuanced and subtle example of how the socially charged distinctions are loaded on saleswomen with and without headscarves. Upper floors of the Anafartalar Bazaar, where most saleswomen wear the headscarf, are depicted as a cozy neighborhood; sales people working in the shops of these floors are in a kind of neighborly social support network. In Aliye's narrative, this means that the sales jobs in the upper floors are more accessible to women with the headscarf. On the other hand, her description of the customers who are more likely to visit the 'entrance floor' gestures to a slightly disguised critique of conspicuous consumption: Those customers are willing to buy famous brands, mainly for the purpose of 'showing off'. The presence of saleswomen wearing headscarf at the entrance floor indicates a strategy on the part of

employers; more precisely, they do not want to alienate the customers of a more humble socioeconomic background. The highlight in this conversation is the way in which Aliye constructs a boundary within the Anafartalar Bazaar with regard to agreeable, acceptable, respectable norms for a saleswoman. According to this narrative, on the one hand, there are those saleswomen with a more closely knit social support network. They are more likely to wear the headscarf, and more likely to appeal to customers who tend to be less interested in conspicuous consumption. On the other hand, there are the 'entrance floor' saleswomen; most of whom do not wear the headscarf and are therefore more likely to address to customers engaged in conspicuous consumption of more expensive, well known brands. It is important to note that Aliye did not distinguish between the customers on the base of wearing headscarves, but on the base of their socioeconomic position. 'Humble' customers, lower class customers are supposed to be more comfortable with saleswomen wearing headscarves. On the other hand, customers who are ready to pay more to buy well known brands, are supposed to be repelled by the look of women with headscarves.

5.3. Normalcy, Presentability and 'Fitting in'

Considering the fact that even shopping malls and large scale retailers catering to many consumers with headscarves do not employ saleswomen with headscarves, the reasons of such exclusion become more intriguing. What kind of constellations of power lead to such exclusion? What is it about women with headscarves that is not considered to 'fit in' the norms and images tailored for

employees of shopping malls and large scale retailers? In this section, I seek answers to these questions through both the studies on retail employment and the findings of my research.

It is argued that service sector jobs in general necessitate looking and behaving in ways that will look 'normal' to the customers, which is put aptly by Nickson et al. (2003) as "looking good and sounding right" (p.185). These normalized codes of appearance are arguably even more salient in the case of jobs in large scale clothing retail as the sales personnel is expected to represent the company image (Broadbridge, 1991). Clothing retail jobs sometimes even require sales personnel to display the products (Leslie, 2002). Some aspects of 'fitting in' the images deemed appropriate by companies include being slim, wearing conventional hair styles and colours, hiding any marks on the body such as tattoos (Nickson et al., 2003; Leslie, 2002). During the fieldwork, it was repeatedly stressed by both employers and employees that 'presentability' was an important condition to be employed in retail. The branch manager of one large scale retailer in Istanbul explained that they did not employ overweight people because they expected the sales personnel to wear and present company products. One focus group participant working in a small scale shop in Pendik, İstanbul, enlisted the norms of employment as follows:

> In our job, appearance is very important. A saleswoman should not look repulsive. For example, overweight people are not preferred. A saleswoman should speak Turkish without an accent. Also she has to sound convincing. The boss understands whether you are smart, vigilant and confident enough. Exceptional beauty is an asset, but it is not enough.

> If you are very beautiful but cannot speak properly to the customers, you will not last long in any shop. (Focus group, İstanbul, January 26, 2012)

Others talked about certain rules of appearance especially for saleswomen, such as looking fashionable, yet 'reasonably modest'. The manager of a shopping mall in Maltepe, İstanbul said that he wanted the mall he manages to look like "Emel Sayın in her twenties"[78]. When I asked him to elaborate, he explained to me how Emel Sayın balanced her beauty with an attitude that resonated well with the norms in Turkish society, how she was accepted and embraced by all sections of society. It was frequently expressed by both employers and saleswomen that showing cleavage and low waist trousers would not be tolerated. Clothes that hide the contours of the body, such as loose and long skirts or loose trousers could be acceptable on the condition that they looked 'fashionable and presentable' on a saleswoman. Actually, the criteria for presentability seems to be elusive and negotiable: Every employer I interviewed underlined that in order to employ a saleswoman, they first have to see her in order to evaluate whether she would 'fit in' or not. In other words, even though the conditions of looking 'normal', 'presentable', 'fashionable' are repeatedly underlined, the exact boundaries of these norms are difficult to specify.

[78] Age is also an important criterion in sales jobs, and especially shopping malls tend to employ younger women (Durakbasa and Cindoglu, 2005). Saleswomen are usually in their 20's or 30's. Indeed, this is not only related to representability but also the requirements of the job, such as standing up all day and long working hours. Yet, youth agrees better with the images conveyed by shopping malls. For instance, in the billboard advertisements of the Kanyon shopping mall in Levent, Istanbul, the slogan "Young. Beautiful. Everyone. Everything" (Genc. Guzel. Herkes. Hersey) is accompanied by images of young, beautiful women who look wealthy as well.

Even though ‘presentability’ with all its elusive meanings seems to be a common concern in retail jobs, it is possible to draw a distinction between large scale and small scale retailers. For large scale retailers, it is important to employ saleswomen who will represent the image of the company with multilayered implications of class, status, and gender identity, whereas the norms in small scale retailers are defined according to different dynamics.

The norms upheld in small scale retailers are more about ‘looking and behaving modestly’, and ‘not standing out’. In the narratives of saleswomen who participated in the research, those norms of modesty are usually defined with regard to the clothes that can and cannot be accepted in the workplaces where they are employed. Mini skirts, strapless blouses or blouses with thin straps, are the most frequently mentioned items of clothing that draw the line. Some attitudes, such as interacting freely with male customers or men working in other shops, have been pointed out as attitudes that would make a saleswomen ‘stand out’ and could lead to losing the job. It was frequently emphasized by the participants that working in a small shop means being in personal contact with the customers. Therefore, abiding by the modesty codes of the districts where they work, and being like a ‘family girl’, were important norms. A saleswoman working in a small shop in Pendik, İstanbul, catering especially to women with headscarves put it as follows:

> In Pendik, none of the shops can tolerate mini skirts and sleeveless tops. Our customers are mostly women, but they come with their husbands. While they try on the products in the changing room, the husband and the saleswoman wait together. If the saleswoman wears revealing clothes, the

> customers will feel threatened. We chat with the customers, we have to make personal relations. That is why, it is important that we abide by the codes of the neighborhood. If you are working in Bağdat Street, OK, wear your mini skirt, it will be tolerated. But in Pendik – no. (Focus group, İstanbul, January 26, 2012)

The norms to 'fit in' are defined by different criteria in large scale retailers. Bearing a 'family girl' image is not as important as it is in small shops, especially because saleswork in large scale retailers makes it possible to protect a distance between the salespeople and the customers. The sales personnel are considered to be representatives of the company and the brand(s) on sale (Durakbaşa and Cindoğlu, 2005; Leslie, 2002). This requires an appearance that conceals lower middle class identity, as well as hints of ethnic or religious difference. Moreover, depending on the image of the brand and the targeted consumer, companies may also seek a certain level of social and cultural capital in employees.[79] Such norms regarding class as well as social and cultural capital can more specifically be observed in shopping malls. Previous research on shopping malls in Turkey suggests that both consumers (Gökarıksel, 1998; Erkip, 2003, 2005) and personnel of shopping malls (Tutalar, 2007) refer to the 'selected' and 'modern' clientele as advantages that make shopping malls 'safe' spaces. The criteria for being defined as 'selected' and 'modern' are based on appearances, attitudes and their implications of class and cultural capital. Gökarıksel's research

[79] The issues of class identity, social and cultural capital are quite tricky in the case of sales jobs. Benson (1986) points out to a tension inherent to sales jobs in the department stores of early 20th century US: Saleswomen are expected to behave in compliance with the codes of the upper class, without claiming any equality with that class. A similar contradiction was observed during the fieldwork: Sales women are expected to dress in line with norms of fashion, yet it is not appreciated to wear too expensive clothes as it could alienate the customers or threaten their sense of distinction.

on Akmerkez (1998) demonstrates that people from lower income groups who visit the mall try to be more careful with their clothing while they are visiting this luxurious shopping mall, in order not to stand out: "The consumers feel obliged to control themselves, behave and dress 'properly' to 'fit into' the 'looks' of the site" (Gökariksel, 1998: 70). Indeed, this concern with 'fitting in' highlights the surveillance and power relations exerted over the shopping mall space, raising questions about the arguments related to the democratizing aspects of malls[80]. Those who do not 'fit in' are mentioned with discontent both by consumers (Erkip, 2003; 2005; Gökarıksel, 1998) and sales personnel (Tutalar, 2007).

To recap the points made above, whereas in small scale retailing, saleswomen are expected to abide by modesty norms of the district and the norms of the customer profile, large scale retailers and shopping malls expect the employees to convey a normalized 'mainstream' middle class image imbricated with implications of certain cultural capital in parallel to the images of the brands being sold. Class difference, as well as ethnic and religious difference is assumed to be detrimental to these images. Yet it is important not to collapse different attributes of 'undesired difference' into one single category, therefore we should acknowledge the nuances between different marks of difference. The question is,

[80] For studies that question the democratizing aspects of shopping malls in particular, see Miller et.al. (1998), Lewis (1990), Voyce (2007). Lewis' study (1990) on the shopping malls in the US suggests that the malls create an illusion of an inclusive environment, yet actually the managements of malls are prone to discourage non-shoppers from entering the malls. Voyce (2007) argues that in India, shopping malls function as venues of privileging the middle class and seperating the middle class consumer from "other", excluded classes. For critiques of modern urban public spaces in general, see Calderia (1996) and Christopherson (1994).

what is specific about the headscarf that locates the woman wearing it outside the norms set by large scale retailers and shopping malls?

5.4. Different Layers of Excluding the Headscarf

In order to capture the specific dynamics which prevent women with headscarves from 'fitting in' the norms of normalcy and presentability in large scale retail settings, it is essential to look into the different layers of the discourse invoked in the 'justification' of the exclusion of the headscarf. This section delves into the intricate patterns of excluding the headscarf within the retail sector.

In searching for an answer to the question of why a woman with a headscarf is not deemed appropriate to work in a mall or a large scale retailer, I received reactions of surprise and bewilderment from the employers. To them, the reasons were so obvious and natural that they probably found me too naive for even asking the question. The first reactions would be to utter sentences such as "A woman with a headscarf would look weird here", or "If a woman really wants to work here, she would take the scarf off anyway", or "Our customers are not used to seeing headscarves in this shop". Yet, despite their normalization of the exclusion, in their narratives it was possible to flesh out different patterns of explanations which intermeshed yet could be analytically distinguished.

5.4.1. Nuances in Exclusion: Class and Cultural Capital

According to the the first pattern of explanations to the exclusion of women with headscarves from certain sales jobs; the headscarf, when combined

with an unprivileged class position, is associated with a lack of cultural capital that does not seem sufficient for sales jobs in malls and large scale retailers. A woman searching a job as a saleswoman is supposed to have higher cultural capital than a cleaning lady, and lower cultural capital when compared to a university educated woman with a professional occupation, or a middle class woman in line with the customer profile of malls and large scale retailers selling brands. 'Cleaning lady' and 'university educated woman' are suitable examples not only because it has been argued before that sales jobs are perceived to rank lower than professional positions and higher than cleaning services (Benson, 1986) but also because in the narratives of employers, these are the two images, along with the 'middle or upper middle class woman customer' against which a saleswoman is judged. In various shopping malls, it was possible to observe that there are cleaning ladies who work with headscarves[81], but not saleswomen. That is because the headscarf is associated with the class position and the related cultural capital expected from a cleaning lady[82]. It was frequently claimed by research participants that even though shopping malls and stores selling expensive brands cater to many customers with headscarves, those customers would not prefer to consult to the advise of a saleswoman with a headscarf, because they would not take her advise on style seriously. For instance, a saleswoman who

[81] It was interesting to observe that in some malls, cleaning ladies have a uniform way of wearing the headscarf. In one mall in İstanbul, I learned that the cleaning ladies with headscarves had to accept to cover their heads in a certain style in order to get the job. They had to tie their scarves at the back of their necks.

[82] It should be noted it is also possible to see women with headscarves as cleaning or kitchen personnel in public offices where the headscarf is officially banned. Haldun Gulalp (2003) argues that they are tolerated because their class position makes them unvisible.

formerly worked in a luxurious boutique catering mostly to wealthy women with headscarves in Erenkoy[83], İstanbul, underlined this argument clearly:

> The elite section of covered women wear brands. This boutique where I worked was selling upscale brands. As a social democrat, I worked there. I even wore short trousers while working there…. The boss has to believe that you are capable of giving advise on fashion and styling. Girls with headscarves do not have that vision. The elite section of covered women think that those girls with headscarves do not know what is fashionable. The covered daughter of a poor family does not relate to fashion except for wearing a colorful headscarf. They have closed worlds. It takes a long time for her to gain a perspective of fashion.
> - What about a poor girl without a headscarf?
> Even if she is poor, an uncovered girl can wear different styles. She would have a better vision of fashion. (Phone interview, İstanbul, February 7, 2012).

The same interviewee also emphasized that the covered customers of the boutique wear very stylish pieces underneath their overcoats, and have a good taste in shoes and accessoires. Here, a distinction is drawn between rich and poor women with headscarves, as well as between covered and uncovered women. This point of view was supported in various short interviews with saleswomen. For example, one saleswoman working in a shopping mall in Kurtköy, İstanbul, explained that to work in this mall where a majority of the customers wear the headscarf, she had to take off her scarf. She said that even customers with headscarves do not want to resort to the advice of saleswomen wearing headscarves, because they do not find that advice trustworthy while they are trying to put together a 'distinguished image' through their style. The manager of

[83] The district of Erenkoy, in the Anatolian side of Istanbul, is home to the members of the wealthy Erenkoy community, which is known for wealthy members. For details on Erenkoy community, see Cakir (1990, pp.59-63).

a shopping mall in Istanbul, which is frequented by women with headscarves, argued that mall customers would not demand to see women with headscarves in this kind of retail settings.

Accordingly, a woman with a headscarf can have a distinguished taste and style, on the condition that she has the material means to access the world of fashion. Yet, 'a poor girl with a headscarf' who is in a position to seek a job as a saleswoman, 'lacks' the cultural capital required to develop a taste in clothing due to both a lack of material means and a lifestyle stigmatized for 'being closed to the world outside'. This supposed 'lack of cultural capital' underscores how the stigmatization related to cultural identity intermeshes with the stigmatization of poverty, and how an unprivileged class position makes the stigma on the headscarf a more resilient one.

In a field visit to the Tekbir *tesettür* store in Ulus, Ankara, while introducing ourselves and explaining the research, we told the saleswomen that we had previously been to the Cikrikcilar Bazaar, which is a lively, traditional marketplace with crowded shops selling cheap textiles and clothing. We told the Tekbir saleswomen that we had conducted some interviews with the saleswomen with headscarves working in those shops. A 30-year-old, articulate university graduate working as a senior saleswoman in this Tekbir store, expressed her discomfort with our decision to include both Çıkrıkçılar Bazaar saleswomen, who are mostly less educated and from lower middle class background, and Tekbir

saleswomen within the same research[84]. She said we could have been 'mislead' by Çıkrıkçılar Bazaar saleswomen, because they would not be able to represent women with headscarves accurately. She was clearly offended to be included in the same mold with Çıkrıkçılar Bazaar saleswomen.

The instances above, highlighting points of break and cleavage among stigmatizations experienced by women with headscarves on basis of class and cultural capital, points out the significance of understanding the roots of stigmatization in nuanced terms. Sandıkçı and Ger (2010) in their study of consumption practices among urban middle and upper middle class women with headscarves argue that the personalization and aesthetization of *tesettür* made it fashionable, ordinary and consequently mitigated the stigmatization suffered by women with headscarves. Accordingly, through personalization of the *tesettür* clothing, women adapt *tesettür* clothing to personal taste, style and comfort, inspiring others to cover. This process mitigates the stigmatization of the headscarf. Aesthetization of *tesettür*, on the other hand, is argued to counter the stigmatized image of women wearing headscarves as "tasteless inferiors" (Sandıkçı and Ger, 2010: 29). In other words, Sandıkçı and Ger contend that the

[84] Tekbir stores tend to employ relatively more educated women. Among the six interviewees of the research, working in Tekbir stores in Ankara and Denizli, one of them was a university graduate, one had an associate degree as a textile technician, and four were high school graduates. Among the total of 86 respondents who filled out the questionnaires for demographic information, there were seven university graduates in total, and four women had associate degrees. Even though this research does not claim to be representative, it would not be inaccurate to argue that saleswomen working in Tekbir are more educated when compared to the general profile of saleswomen with headscarves. For details on the demographic information and on how sales methods, as well as working conditions differ among Tekbir stores and small scale retailers where saleswomen with headscarves work, see Chapter 4.

personalization and aesthetization of the *tesettür* fashion especially among middle and upper middle class women, helped to disseminate, routinize and destigmatize *tesettür* clothing. Yet, according to the findings in this dissertation, the exclusionary practices experienced by a cleaning lady, a saleswoman, an upper middle class consumer, tend to differ, hence they do not disappear all together. Even though middle class or upper middle class women in stylish *tesettür* clothing may have changed the way they are perceived, the perception of lower middle class women as 'low status', as 'lacking cultural capital', is more resilient. It is significant to see that being of different classes makes a difference in terms of the experiences of stigmatization.

5.4.2. 'Enclave Society' and the Managerial Discourse

The second pattern of explanations for the exclusion of women with headscarves from certain retail jobs is related to the assumption that a woman who wants to keep her headscarf in working life, readily accepts, and even prefers to stay out of certain portions of the retail labor market. This assumption implies that the headscarf is an indicator that a woman wearing it should subscribe to a fixed, stable, uniform identity. Some employers legitimized the exclusion of women with headscarves by arguing that a woman who 'insists on' working with her headscarf on, is essentially someone who would already prefer to work in a store where wearing a headscarf is a prerequisite.

Most employers emphasized that they would hire a saleswoman who wears a headscarf *on the condition* that she agreed to take off her scarf during working

hours. Indeed, during the research it was voiced several times that many saleswomen with headscarves take off their scarves to work in malls and large scale retailers. This fact was pointed out as an 'evidence' demonstrating that if a woman really had an intention to work in such retailers, she could do so, by taking out the scarf. The 'evidence' in turn, was emphasized as a legitimation of rejecting women who did not accept to take off their scarves. For instance, the shopping mall manager in Maltepe, İstanbul argued that in his 35 year long career in the retail sector, he had never seen or heard of any woman who insisted to work as a saleswoman in a large scale retailer with her headscarf on. He further asserted that "there is no such problem in retail". According to him, if a woman with a headscarf absolutely wanted to work with her headscarf on, she would already go to one of the *tesettür* chain stores, where all the customers and saleswomen are covered. He said, "Those stores only employ women with headscarves. They do not employ uncovered girls. Because you can not sell snails in a Muslim neighborhood". Apparently, it was clear to him that just like those stores who are not supposed to 'sell snails in a Muslim neighborhood', malls are not supposed to include *tesettür* stores, or saleswomen with headscarves.

The branch manager of one of Tekbir *tesettür* stores in Ankara verified the information that they only employ saleswomen with headscarves. He explained this employment policy almost through an 'affirmative action' framework, arguing that they are concerned with providing opportunities for women with headscarves who are otherwise excluded from the sector. In other words, he tried to legitimize his store's exclusion of women without headscarves by arguing that

this store is just trying to 'right the wrongs' of large scale retailers who do not employ women with headscarves. Besides, rather similar to the shopping mall manager who argued that a woman with a headscarf would rather work in a *tesettür* store, he was also quite confident that a woman without a headscarf would rather not apply to a job in the Tekbir store anyway. Notably, both interviewees tried to justify the exclusionary employment policies with reference to the other's exclusionary practices.

The narratives of both the shopping mall manager and the Tekbir store manager draw on a vision of the retail employment in closed enclaves. Neither of them thought there was a problem with rejecting a woman's job application merely on the base of wearing or not wearing a headscarf, because they both argued that a woman could *choose* to go to 'the *other* kinds of stores'. In the case of the shopping mall manager, even though the mall catered to many customers with headscarves, this fact did not change his vision of the 'enclave society', where the 'Muslim neighborhood' did not touch, interact with or influence the neighborhood which is supposed to include shopping malls.

Another significant thread in the shopping mall manager's narrative was the tendency to resort to a language of 'managerial' concerns, and presenting the practice of excluding women with headscarves as a consumption choice offered to the consumer. He underlined that there is no demand from the customers to include *tesettür* stores in the 'brand mix' of the mall, and that not employing women with headscarves was a matter of 'human resources policy'. According to this 'managerial' discourse, he is running a mall that caters to those consumers

who do not prefer to be serviced by saleswomen with headscarves. If those customers want to consult to the advise of saleswomen with headscarves, they have a choice: The *tesettür* store, where they 'do not sell snails'.

The argument about women with headscarves having other choices in their own 'enclaves', and the language of 'managerial concerns' serve the purpose of disguising discrimination and stripping these discriminatory employment policies from the political and social connotations they bear. The ways of explaining, normalizing and 'legitimizing' the exclusionary practices in the process of employment elaborated above, highlights the predicaments of making differences visible in the private sector labor market. Göle (2003) argues that accentuating the 'difference' of the headscarf and subscribing to the language of politics of Islamic difference contributes to rethinking hegemonic norms towards opening up the public sphere to religious difference. Yet, this research shows that when it comes to employment in private sector retail jobs, accentuation of difference does not work in a way that benefits women with headscarves, neither does it lead to the questioning of hegemonic norms in retail settings. Rather than 'opening up' to difference, what we see here is a segregation of shopping settings into enclaves, and designating women with headscarves as a type of labor force that is 'fit' to work in the enclave that is supposed to be in harmony with the 'difference' embodied by the headscarf. Rather than questioning hegemonic norms, these norms are reinforced and reproduced by assigning women with headscarves to lower status jobs. Since discrimination is disguised and legitimized through supposedly 'neutral' market rationality that insulates the issue from its social and

political aspects, it is hardly possible to struggle against it by demanding social and political recognition to an accentuated Islamic difference. Therefore instead of formulating the problem of discrimination against women with headscarves *exclusively* in terms of the 'misrecognition' of Islamic difference, I suggest that it is essential to adopt a broader framework which problematizes the processes that make discriminatory employment policies possible in the private sector labor market.

5.4.3. 'Privacy' of the Workplace

The important question that should be raised at this point is whether the realm of employment in the private sector is an issue related to the public sphere or not. To put in other words, is a shop, or a chain store, or a shopping mall private to its owner(s) to the extent that they can exercise the liberty to choose employers according to any criteria they see fit?

Nancy Fraser, in her critique of the bourgeois conception of the public sphere, criticizes the exclusion of 'private' interests and issues from this conception (Fraser, 1997). She focuses particularly on issues pertaining to domestic life, and those pertaining to private property in a market economy, as two sets of issues that the bourgeois conception of the public sphere excludes, to detriment of disadvantaged groups. She argues that as ownership in market economy is taken as private; economic issues and interests are excluded from the public debate:

> The rhetoric of economic privacy… seeks to exclude some issues and interests from public sphere by economizing them, the issues in question here are cast as impersonal market imperatives or as 'private' ownership prerogatives or as technical problems for managers and planners, all in contradistinction to public, political matters… The result is to enclave certain matters in specialized discursive arenas and thereby to shield them from general public debate and contestation. (Fraser, 1997c: 88)

Fraser further contends that issues of workplace democracy get to be formulated in terms of economic or managerial 'private' problems, which are not to be publicly discussed but rather privately decided by private property owners, managers, planners. Limiting the issue of workplace democracy within the private realm ends up in perpetuating the subordination of disadvantaged groups.

The employment policies in the retail sector which produce enclaves where women with headscarves can and cannot work, perfectly exemplify the predicaments of 'economizing' and privatizing the issues related to workplace democracy. The exclusionary employment practices elaborated in detail in this chapter are naturalized by formulating the issue in a discourse of managerial concerns. According to this formulation, owners and managers of large scale retailers and shopping malls target a certain segment of consumers, designate an institutional image to address to those consumers, and pursue an employment policy that keeps up with this institutional image. This discourse goes unchallenged. In addition, it should be emphasized that in Turkey, there is no legal framework to challenge and penalize these practices in the employment process. Even though Article 122 of the Turkish Penal Code foresees penalty for discrimination in the process of employment, the clause is rendered ineffective by

an additional statement, which states that an employer has the right to search certain personal traits in choosing an employee, leaving ambiguous what those personal traits include (Karan, 2007: 168). Labor Law Article 5 also forbids discrimination in the employment process. However, it only foresees penalties in the case of forms of discrimination that occur *after* employment, further leaving prospective cases of discrimination in the employment process in ambiguity (Karan, 2007: 156; Yenisey, 2006: 68).

In order to confirm this information, I conducted a phone interview with an officer from the Istanbul Union of the Chambers of Artists and Artisans in February 2012. I asked whether the Union at least informally demanded of its members to make the employment process accountable. The officer responded as follows:

> I understand, you are asking whether we have something like a regulation against discrimination, like they have in some Western countries[85]. No, there is no law, no regulation, nothing of that sort. This is related to democracy I suppose. No, we are not that democratic. (Phone interview, January 20, 2012)

Lawyer Fatma Benli, an expert in cases related to the headscarf ban in public sector and the former ban in universities, emphasized in an in depth interview that the legal framework for cases of discrimination is both narrowly and vaguely defined. She underlined that in practice it is nearly impossible to prove discrimination, especially in cases related to the employment process. The

[85] One example of such anti-discrimination regulation is the Employment Equality Regulations which came into force in 2003 in the UK. This law prohibits discrimination in employment based on religion and belief. Reina Lewis (2007) contends that this law prevents the discrimination against saleswomen who wear headscarves.

reason, according to her, was the general legal perspective which prioritizes the employer's right to choose the people s/he will employ. Whereas the ban in public sector jobs was a more 'visible' problem, against which a political struggle could be possible, the discrimination against women with headscarves in private sector jobs remain rather invisible, hence much more difficult to struggle against.

5.5. Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter looks into the processes through which a demarcation line is drawn between large scale and small scale retailers in terms of employing women with headscarves, and how women with headscarves are clustered either in *tesettür* chain stores or less secure and less gainful jobs in small scale retailers. This structural exclusion is at least partly related to broader patterns of normalizing certain codes in the retail sector, such as middle class appearance, an urban accent, being able bodied, looking healthy and slim. These norms work toward excluding those who 'deviate'. Yet, the specific exclusion of the headscarf and 'legitimizations' of the exclusion demonstrate two processes: First, lower middle class, relatively less educated women are labelled as lacking the cultural capital necessary to work in shopping malls and large scale retailers selling well known brands. This label is related to both their class position and the assumed connotations of the headscarf. Even though it is argued that the headscarf is in a process of destigmatization in the case of middle and upper middle class, educated women who dissociate the headscarf from connotations of backwardness,

patriarchal oppression, ignorance, failure to urbanize, or a reactionary stance against modernity, such connotations remain resilient in the case of lower middle class, less educated women. Second, employers try to justify the exclusion of women from sales jobs on the base of wearing or not wearing the headscarf through a discourse that envisions a society in enclaves. Accordingly, it is natural that women who want to work with their headscarves on, should and would already choose to work in a *tesettür* store, or a small scale retailer that would employ her. This discourse underlining a 'choice' of 'enclaves' is also used in the case of consumers: Whoever wants to be serviced by saleswomen with headscarves may choose to shop in *tesettür* stores. As a result, the difference displayed by the headscarf is not only excluded, but also taken as the indicator of a fixed and stable identity that is to be served as a consumption choice for people sharing that stable identity. The assumption of a fixed identity makes it possible for the employers to argue that the headscarf readily assigns the woman wearing it to a limited portion of retail jobs.

In conclusion, it is possible to contend that these findings concerning the specific issue of exclusion and ghettoization experienced by women with headscarves in the labor market for retail jobs uncovers two major issues. These two issues push the discussion on the stigmatization of the headscarf into new territory in two ways.

First, the findings make it neccesary to look beyond the arguments that take women with headscarves as a single cultural category and analyse their predicaments with the same analytical category of stigmatization of cultural

difference displayed by the headscarf. According to such analysis, when any woman, regardless of her position of class and cultural capital, wears a headscarf, she is marked "as the backward, the uncultured and uneducated, the rural, the traditional, the particular, the lower class" (Çınar 2008: 897). This analysis indeed provides insight to the pejorative connotations attributed to an Islamic way of life and the headscarf, as opposed to the privileged position granted to 'the secular'. Yet, this analysis is not sufficient to account for the predicaments of lower middle class, less educated women with headscarves in the private sector labor market. There are layers of discrimination that go beyond cultural categorizations. These layers are intermeshed with the insecurity of less qualified jobs, and the arbitrary and unaccountable criteria of employment that renders employees vulnerable to discrimination. This is not solely a problem related to the headscarf, but to all visible (or even audible) religious, ethnic, bodily, sexual differences. Hence in a struggle against this multilayered discrimination, capturing the issue within the contours of 'exclusion of Islamic difference' is not only insufficient, but even counterproductive.

Second, the findings highlight the significance of looking beyond the state monitored public sphere and the homogenizing norms tailored for women by the state, against which women with headscarves are judged. Because the findings demonstrate that the state monitored public sphere is not the only realm where those homogenizing norms categorize and exclude women. Indeed, this research is limited to a detailed portrayal of the labor market for retail jobs, in which

mostly lower middle class women without university education are employed[86]. Yet, we can legitimately argue that lower middle class women are categorized in certain portions of the market, especially to relatively low status jobs such as cleaning jobs, or working settings with less favorable working conditions. These findings shed light on how the headscarf, combined with a lower middle class identity and a lack of university education, gets to be categorized as 'cheaper labor', even among cheap labor. Moreover, whereas there is a history of vocally protesting the headscarf ban in state monitored institutions such as the university, the exclusions in the private sector labor market, which almost work as informal bans, are received with silence and acception. Defending Islamic difference against the grain of homogenizing ideal woman image of the modernization project through making it visible, may contribute to the transformation of norms (Göle, 2003) at least as far as we are concerned with the state monitored public sphere. However, when it comes to the private sector labor market, due to the economizing and privatizing of decisions related to private ownership, and the concomitant lack of legal framework preventing discrimination in the employment process, ways to claimsmaking are blocked. In this context, Islamic difference does not enlarge the universe in which it seeks to exist, but it is reduced to being an indicator of a fixed identity which only carries a 'market value' as far as it addresses the consumption choices of a part of society.

[86] Cindoğlu's study (2010) on university educated women with headscarves points out the ways in which women in professional occupations also suffer exclusionary and discriminatory practices in working life. However, they face such practices especially when they need to come into contact with state institutions.

CHAPTER 6

DISTANCING FROM THE ESSENTIALIZED MEANINGS OF THE HEADSCARF: THE DESIRE TO BE UNMARKED

6.1. Introduction

This chapter looks into the multifaceted meanings loaded on the headscarf in contemporary Turkey, which stem from a plethora of expectations and assumptions related to the practice of wearing the headscarf. It is not only headscarf skeptic[87] stereotypes that engender these expectations and assumptions. Discourses prescribing the headscarf a normative meaning of deeply rooted piety, as well as discourses that frame the headscarf as a modern assertion of identity and difference also produce them. Women wearing the headscarf find themselves surrounded and marked by an abundance of assumptions, as a result of which they are supposed to 'prove' their piety, or undertake the mission to display a coherent identity marked by religious difference. The findings of the research on women

[87] I borrow the concept of 'headscarf skeptic' from Saktanber and Çorbacıoğlu (2008). They relate headscarf skepticism to increasing numbers of women with headscarves and the transformation of the headscarf from a "private question of piety to a public question of freedom of religious expression" (p.514). My use of the concept is quite different as I use it more loosely to refer to reactions directed against the visibility of the headscarf, especially in urban areas.

with headscarves working in retail jobs reveal complex discursive strategies employed vis a vis these expectations and assumptions. Narratives of research participants particularly highlight a tendency to unload the headscarf from the meanings attributed to it. This tendency surfaces in narratives referring to the headscarf as a contingent, negotiable practice that is not essentially inseparable from piety or identity. The findings also reveal intricate negotiations revolving around the practice of wearing the headscarf vis a vis opportunities of finding high status employment and concerns related to the patriarchal notion of modesty.

In order to depict the multifaceted realm of connotations attributed to the headscarf, the chapter first analyses these connotations by distinguishing three frames: Headscarf skeptic frames, the frame relating the headscarf to deeply rooted piety, and the frame of identity and difference. Then it proceeds with an investigation of the ways in which the headscarf is formulated by the participant narratives.

This chapter does not claim to develop a comprehensive explanation of what wearing the headscarf means in contemporary Turkey. Quite to the contrary, it argues that such a comprehensive explanation would be misleading, for there is not a 'group' of 'women with headscarves'. Rather, there are intricate negotiations and contestations seeking to find ways of being in the world, in relation to where one stands in terms of class and status. The chapter attempts to look into these negotiations and contestations among lower middle class women working in retail jobs and understand how the headscarf plays out in a context of relatively low status and insecure jobs.

The chapter first investigates the discourses that develop a skeptical regard of the headscarf and women wearing them. This skepticism arguably taps into the expectation of the modernization theory that religion and religious signs are bound to wither away from public life in the course of modernization and urbanization. Accordingly, women with headscarves are stereotyped as women who remain at the margins of these processes by their age or lack of economic, social and cultural capital (N. Arat, 1997). Therefore the visibility of urban, young, fashionably dressed women with headscarves raise skepticism of the motives lying behind insofar as they transgress these stereotypical notions. Headscarf skeptic discourses are ultimately embedded in a lack of trust in the motivations of women wearing the headscarf[88].

Secondly, the headscarf is expected to connote a declaration of a deeply rooted commitment to the perfection of piety (Şişman, 2000; 2011). Unlike headscarf skeptic discourses which seek ulterior motives under the headscarf, this second thread normatively relates the headscarf to a deeply rooted piety. Accordingly women with headscarves are supposed to be invested in cultivating and sustaining an Islamic lifestyle without yielding to the currents of modernization and secularization of social life. The headscarf is supposed to be a declaration of having already made a set of irreversible choices in life; choices that draw on Islamic precepts. Women wearing the headscarf, yet not fitting into

[88] These discourses are especially explicit in popular discourse and mainstream media. For example, Fatih Altaylı, a prominent journalist and columnist, writes in 2000 in his column in Hürriyet that the headscarf is a symbol of religious fundamentalism, and the politicization of religion (Hürriyet, 24 January 2000). Özdemir İnce, another columnist, in his column titled "Türban conspiracy" (Türban Fesadı) that those who wear the headscarf in public violate the rights of others. He goes so far as to describe 'türban' as a fascist symbol, like swastika (Hürriyet, 12 October 2010).

these expectations are questioned for the level of 'consciousness' of their religious conviction, denounced for corrupting the image of women with headscarves, and weakening the strong statement of religious difference that should ideally be bestowed on the headscarf[89].

The third thread of connotations loaded on the headscarf highlight the claims of identity and difference that young, urban women wearing modern forms of headscarf are expected to be declaring. This thread has significant currency in the academic discussion on women, Islam and headscarves in Turkey. The essence of the argument is that educated, young, urban women with headscarves are involved in a challenge against the homogenizing ideal of Westernized, secularized citizen of the Turkish Republic. It is argued that their headscarf is different from the headscarf of the elder generation as it is motivated by a 'conscious Muslim' identity, which, according to Saktanber (2002: 164) refers to something more than simply being born into a Muslim family, or following the five pillars of Islam, but which necessitates seeking ways to live 'in entire accordance with Islamic precepts' and seeking ways to create an Islamic lifestyle. Other scholars attribute a novelty to young, urban wearers of the headscarf by also emphasizing that their motivations are contoured by the modern Islamist movement (Göle, 1993, 1997a, 1997b, 2003; Çayır, 2000; İlyasoğlu, 1998). Hence it is framed as a rupture from the traditional practices of covering.

[89] One clear example is the recent discussion in the media over the newly invented concept of 'Süslüman', a combination of the words 'Müslüman' (Muslim) and 'süslü' (embellished). The concept refers generally to women who wear a headscarf, and also put on make-up, wear fashionable clothes, care about looking attractive, and do not strictly abide by *tesettür* codes in their choice of clothes. For example, Mehmet Şevket Eygi, an Islamist intellectual and a columnist of Islamist, conservative Milli Gazete, scornfully defines 'Süslüman's as women who "wear their hair in a bun as big as a camel's hump, with high heeled shoes, wearing a wide range of colors" (Milli Gazete, 3 July 2013).

Therefore, the concept of 'new veiling' is frequently employed (Göle, 1993, 1997b, 2000c; Çınar, 2005; İlyasoğlu, 1994, 1998). This line of argumentation draws heavily on a frame of politics of difference and identity, mainly as it views the practice of wearing the headscarf as a modern and transformative identity claim. This point of view supposes that the wearers of the modern, urban headscarf consciously underline Islamic difference through their use of the headscarf, and 'sharpen their identity by labeling themselves Islamists' (Göle, 1997 b: 89). Consequently, the headscarf is portrayed as necessarily being an inseperable part of identity.

Although the second and third threads are dramatically different from the thread of headscarf skepticism, this chapter argues that they also contribute to the plethora of expectations and assumptions that surround women with headscarves by putting an essentialized mark of difference on the headscarf. The mark of difference situates women with headscarves under scrutiny and renders them vulnerable to the questioning of their intentions as well as the coherence of their identity. They get to be categorized, and subjected to assumptions that they would act and think in certain ways. On the one hand, headscarf skeptic discourses label women with headscarves as either backward, oppressed, undereducated, or politically manipulated. On the other hand, the lines of argumentation developed against headscarf skeptic assumptions, substantialize the headscarf with romanticized and idealized connotations such as carrying 'the mark of difference' as a subversive and transformative practice, or a desire to declare an 'irreversible choice' to commit to the commands of faith.

One point should be clarified: The argument I am making here has nothing against pursuing a politics of recognition to demand respect for collectivities that have suffered 'misrecognition'. To the contrary, I agree with the argument that acting in collectivities to demand respect for differences which do not fit in the established norms contributes to creating more liberating and inclusive public spheres (Fraser, 1997). Neither does my argument include a normative judgement against acting upon a deep religious conviction and organizing one's life according to the dictates of religion. Yet, fixing these connotations on the headscarf is problematic to the extent that it contributes to drawing the contours of an identity with an essentialized substance. As this identity is located squarely into one pole of the dichotomized portrayal of 'secularist vs. Islamic cultural struggle' in Turkey, it gets to be charged with a cultural substance, marked[90] and 'culturalized'. As Anne Phillips (2007) points out, when a group is marked as representing a solid and unified culture, individuals somehow associated with that group are expected to define and live their lives with cultural references only. To put more clearly, culture is treated 'as the only explanation for virtually everything they say or do' (Phillips, 2007: 9). What is at stake here is that by being marked, women with headscarves are subjected to an enduring process of scrutiny regarding the consistency of their appearance and behaviour with the claims they are supposed to be making by wearing the headscarf: How much do they cover? What are the shapes of their headscarves? How long are their skirts?

[90] It should also be considered that in this process of marking, the image of the 'uncovered woman' is designated as the representor of the 'opposite' pole, getting marked as well. I agree with Alev Çınar's (2008) argument that in the process of cultural polarization especially in the post-1990 era, as secularism has become rigidified as a lifestyle, secular norms have also become "marked" and rendered open to scrutiny, whereas they were unnegotiated and normalized before.

How much flesh do they show? Are their attitudes in line with their headscarves? Are they properly religious? What kind of a statement of resistance and subversion are they underlining by wearing the headscarf? This endless scrutinization culminates in a patrolling for 'coherence' of identity.

The challenge of this chapter is to point out that this patrolling for 'coherence' is not exclusive to headscarf skeptic discourses. Discourses that view the headscarf as the declaration of an identity formed by religious difference, or as a quest for the production of the pious self also engage in a process of essentialization. This is not to contest the point that some women are definitely approaching their headscarves as an inseperable part of their identity, or that some women are cultivating their bodies towards the production of the pious self through covering (Gökarıksel, 2009; Mahmood, 2005). Yet, what about women who are not subscribing to these dominant discourses in formulating their practices of covering? What about women who are uncomfortable with the expectation that they should be asserting difference through their headscarves, or who are intimidated by the expectation that they should become representatives of perfect piety? Are they to be explained away as 'traditional' or 'unconscious' as they do not fit into established frames of 'new veiling'? Most importantly, which questions are precluded when we disregard their experiences related to the headscarf?

The findings of the research reveal intricate contestations and negotiations around the practice of wearing the headscarf. These contestations complicate the absolute meanings loaded on the headscarf, and the categorizations into which women are neatly located. The chapter traces the pattern of fragmented, relational

and contingent narratives of the headscarf, which stand out in the research participants' explanations. These narratives point out a strong tendency to avoid a discourse of difference through underlining that the headscarf bears contingent, not essential or absolute meanings. This tendency unfolds in different ways. One way is to explain the practice of covering as a graded practice, which makes it possible to avoid making a strong statement, whether it be about a deep commitment to religion, or the defense of cultural and religious difference. Another way is to refer to the headscarf as an 'exterior' practice that cannot define the 'inner' religious conviction and piety of a woman. Yet another way is to question the boundaries between the states of 'being covered' and 'being uncovered' by referring to them as blurred and porous. These discourses render the headscarf a negotiable practice, and overflow the rigid frames of meaning built around it.

6.2. Assumptions, Expectations and Frames

This section delineates and analyses the complex set of expectations and assumptions regarding the practice of wearing the headscarf. Hereby, I distinguish three main clusters of discourses which impose certain boundaries around women with headscarves.

6.2.1. 'Headscarf Skeptic' Interventions

The concept of headscarf skeptic interventions is employed loosely here, to refer to the reactions directed to the headscarf especially when donned by younger urban women claiming a public presence in the modern urban spaces.

These interventions are nourished by stereotypical notions of the headscarf as backward, rural, traditional, and an indicator of women's submission. These notions are embedded within the concern that the headscarf is a threat against the achievements of Turkish modernization project, especially with regard to women's rights. Kemalist feminist scholar Necla Arat articulates this concern as follows:

> [Veiled women] cannot and do not want to break away from the backwardness of the past. They sustain the traditional, submissive image of woman, and try to abolish women's rights that the Republic granted them. . . . Modern and secular-minded women do not, on the other hand, define their honor (*namus*) with a piece of cloth that covers one's head [and] enjoy being equal and respectable members of Turkish society from the establishment of the Republic to this day. (cited in and translated by Keskin-Kozat, 2003: 193)

Headscarf skeptic discourses do not back down when the stereotypes of being 'backward', 'traditional', 'submissive' are challenged. To the contrary, they move into a new level through the various forms of anxieties invoked *especially* when those stereotypes are challenged.

Such headscarf skeptic assumptions were recently voiced in an interview conducted with Gülriz Sururi, a prominent actress coming from an intellectual elite family of high artistic credentials. In an interview to an internet newspaper (Özvarış, 2013), Sururi put together and almost summarized the headscarf skeptic assumptions in one breath, which fuelled a heated discussion in the media. I find her statements to be particularly important as they encompass, reflect and connect various strands of headscarf skepticism:

> Sururi: This kind of *tesettür* did not exist. Theirs was different, they were not covered so tightly. My grandmother also used to wear a headscarf.

> Headscarf was something like a beret you wear against cold weather. But now they cover the entire hair. It is totally a superficial fashion.
> - Why are you disturbed by women who prefer to live religiosity this way**?**
>
> Sururi: They cover the head, but other than that they expose all, you can even see their cleavage.
> - Whose cleavage**?**
>
> Sururi: Some girls'. They have *tesettür* on the head, but artificial eyelashes, tights, make-up, piercing… They are fully invested in using the advantages of femininity. Sex appeal, in every part of the world, should be covered. Those who expose it are not regarded well. Mini skirts are all right, but not if it looks obscene.
> - Is this not the same as telling uncovered women to wear skirts under the knee**?** Are you not doing the same thing to girls with headscarves?
>
> Sururi: No. Look, some people can cover with their own will. I accept that. But where were they 10-12 years ago**?** They came systematically. They were ordered to sit down at cafes in Nişantaşı, so they did. They spread over to the most unexpected cafes, cinemas, theaters. (Özvarış, 19.02.2013, t24.com.tr).

The headscarf that 'disturbs' the actress seems to connote a total rupture from traditional types of covering, and even a rupture from common codes of modesty. The girls with headscarves, in her narrative, are acting very incoherently by 'showing cleavage' under the tightly covered hair, displaying a threatening sexuality[91]. By arguing that women with headscarves suddenly appeared on the streets in groups 10 years ago upon orders, she relates them directly to the rise in political Islam. This political labelling also works to underline the distance of the 'rootless' headscarf from 'sincere piety' embedded in social continuity. Moreover, as she associates the headscarf with low cultural and economic capital, she thinks

[91]The idea that "covering" is somehow related to a threatening sexuality is rooted in Orientalist fantasies in which sexual difference and cultural difference are enmeshed (Yeğenoğlu, 2003: 57).

it is most 'unexpected' to see them in venues of cultural consumption, therefore it could only be happening systematically, as part of a political project.

Bitter stories of being intervened with such skeptical remarks, was a frequently repeated theme in the narratives of research participants. In these remarks, it is possible to distinguish three interrelated dimensions of skepticism: (1) Underlining 'incoherence' in covered women's attitudes and appearances, (2) The assumption of ulterior political motives (3) Class based assumptions. The common thread binding these is a "lack of trust" (Atasoy, 2009: 229) in what motivates women to cover their heads.

The first dimension, the emphasis on the 'incoherence' of women with headscarves, comes loaded with the will to expose the perceived contradiction between how women with headscarves should look and behave and how they actually do. One typical story of such an intervention came up in the focus group with married women in İstanbul. Ergül, a 28 year old, remarkably attractive and elegant woman dressed in a purple glossy headscarf on her long tunic, with make-up of matching color, complained about drawing reactions especially when she dressed well and put on make-up:

> Ergül: …For instance there was this man, he was around 50 years old. He must have been looking at me, probably I did not realize. Then he came to me. He said "Let me tell you something. Look at you and your turban" "What about it?" I asked. "Look at that make-up on your face" he said. "Are you not ashamed of yourself? You claim to be covered but you wear that make-up too. How I hate these women with turbans!" He looked like a gentleman, by the way. He was a well-dressed man. (Focus group, İstanbul, February 12, 2009).

In this conversation, the man is voicing anger over the 'incoherence' he perceives in Ergül's choices. Wearing the headscarf, in this understanding, is

supposed to mean that the woman has already made the irreversible choice to give up the desire to be attractive. Otherwise she is being incoherent, revealing 'secret motives' other than avoiding men's looks.

The concern with 'secret motives' is closely related to the second dimension of headscarf skeptic assumptions: The assumption that there are ulterior political motives behind the headscarf. Accordingly, the headscarf that appears in urban, modern public spaces are unrelated to a 'sincere piety' embedded in the continuity of rural traditions; it is rather taken as a fabricated political phenomenon. The ulterior political motives associated with the headscarf range from 'terrorism' to being motivated by foreign political powers.

In a focus group with married saleswomen conducted in Denizli in 2009, one participant, Seray, told the story of how she was taken to be a 'terrorist' because of her headscarf:

> When I first started to work in this shop, there was a lot going on, there was the event of Fadime Sahin[92], there were events in the university. There was this customer, I can never forget her, she was a neighbor of us, she was a teacher. One day she stormed into the store, wearing an Ataturk badge. I was wearing a black headscarf in those days. She was very harsh, she said "I would never shop here normally". She pointed to the room at the back of the shop. "Look" she said. "you also have one of those secret rooms". You know, those days the Hizbullah had secret rooms where they killed people[93]. That's what she meant! She called me a terrorist! I was so

[92] 'The event of Fadime Şahin' refers to an incident that took place in December 1996, two months before the February 28 process of military's crash on political Islam. The incident erupted as police and secular media raided the apartment of a religious order's leader, finding him in bed with a woman, Fadime Şahin. Later on, Şahin claimed that the leader of the religious order, Müslüm Gündüz sexually took advantage of her. The incident was widely covered in the media, as a 'proof' of moral hypocrisy of radical Islamists. Years later, it was argued that the whole incident was a plot to play into the hands of the military and create context and justification in public opinion for February 28 process. For a detailed analysis of the incident, see Çınar (2005).

[93] In 2000, in wide police operations against the Turkish Hizbullah, it was found out that Hizbullah killed many people in brutal ways, and buried them in holes dug under houses used by the militants.

> shocked that I could barely speak! And she was our neighbor, imagine! (Focus group, Denizli, June 6, 2009)

Notably, Seray stresses that it is her neighbour who draws links between terrorism and the headscarf, implicitly underlining that the lack of trust accorded to women with headscarves even surfaces among acquaintances. It is striking to see that the woman customer notices 'the room at the back' and immediately associates with the image of 'threat' attached to the headscarf: A locus of secret intentions, kept away from the eyes of the public, where uncanny things happen. On the other hand, Seray immediately notices the customer's Atatürk badge[94], as a symbol that helps her understand, without needing to ask, what kind of a link the customer is drawing between completely unrelated items such as the black headscarf and the room at the back. It is a powerful scene which exposes how two women reduce each other to conveyors of symbols.

The symbolic power of Atatürk surfaced in other interviews and focus groups during the research, mostly as a ground of contestation on being "the authentic daughters of Ataturk". In a focus group discussion in İstanbul, contestations around being "indigenous" and authentic were particularly underlined:

> Serap: I work in Okmeydanı, and there is no problem there, the headscarf is even an advantage. But I have many problems in my neighborhood. I live in Feriköy, you know, this is a neighborhood of foreigners. It is mostly foreigners living there. One day I was in a bank in Şişli. A woman came and directly pushed me. What are you doing here she said, why

[94]Items ranging from badges to coffee mugs carrying Atatürk pictures became popular, especially in the 1990's. The popularization of such items as opposed to the commodification of Islamic symbols took place against the backdrop of a polarization of social life into 'Islamic' and 'secularist' camps in the 1990's. For detailed analysis of the connotations of symbols carrying the figure of Atatürk, see Navaro Yashin (2002) and Özyürek (2008).

don't you go to Iran! She was an old woman. I could not do anything. These foreigners… They are so reactive.

- What do you mean by foreigner?
  Serap: Non-Muslim. There are many non-Muslims in Feriköy. But in Okmeydanı, no problems at all.
- Ergül: The district is so important. For example in Şişli, again an old lady. She said to me, 'This is Atatürk's country, what are you doing here?' I was shocked.
- What did you say to her?
- Ergül: Atatürk does not belong to you, he is also my Atatürk, I said.
- Nazife: Atatürk's wife and mother were also covered!
  (Focus group, İstanbul, February 12, 2009)

There are multiple significant moments in this conversation. As Serap and Ergul both experienced these reactions in Şişli, where many Christian, especially Armenian citizens of the Turkish Republic live, they directly attribute the reactions to those citizens. Moreover, they call them 'foreigners', in an apparent gesture to denonunce those reactions as coming from 'outside' and underline themselves as the authentic and the indigenous Turkish women. Similarly, the woman who pushed Serap in the bank, asks her what she is doing in Turkey instead of Iran, emphasizing the 'foreignness' of the headscarf to the Turkish Republic, and underlining her own status as the real owner of the country. In Ergül's story, the same contestation unfolds through a fight over whom Atatürk belongs to. 'Owning' Atatürk here symbolically means owning the image of the authentic Turkish woman, a contestation that is supported by Nazife reminding that Atatürk's mother and wife were also covered.

The contestations on the question of 'who represents the indigenous Turkish woman', also intricately intermesh with contestations over class and status boundaries. The third dimension of headscarf skeptic assumptions unfolds in the tendency to regard women with headscarves as entitled only to lower

economic and cultural capital. Gülriz Sururi says that she sees women with headscarves 'in the most **unexpected** cafes, theaters, cinemas' of Nişantaşı, and she assumes they assert their presence in such places upon 'orders'. This assumption is revealing the idea that it is most unlikely for a woman with a headscarf to have the appropriate taste and cultural capital to enjoy a play or a movie, or enough economic capital to visit expensive cafes in Nişantaşı. The research participants' narratives are permeated with parallel stories of being scolded and 'reminded of their boundaries' especially when they are engaged in cultural consumption that is not seen fit for them. In another focus group discussion in İstanbul, Ülkü, a 27 year old woman with a particular interest in visual arts and an associate degree in serigraphy, explained her experience of being regarded as 'out of place' when she visited İstanbul Modern, an art gallery with a permanent collection of paintings by some of the most prominent artists from Turkey:

> Ülkü: Once I went to see the İstanbul Modern with a friend. A woman came towards us. Apparently she first thought we were tourists from Iran. She started yelling at us: 'You are not Iranians, what are you doing here?' We come across this kind of hostility quite frequently. Another time, we were taking a walk with another friend in Etiler. She also wears a headscarf. She also had a piercing on her nose. 'What are you doing in Etiler?', 'You should not be wearing piercing'… These were the insulting remarks we received that day. People entitle themselves to put us in such awkward positions. You cannot do this, you cannot do that.
> Meryem: Something similar happened to me… We have a summer house in Çınarcık. One evening, we went out for a walk with my family. In the queue to buy an ice cream, a rich looking woman looked at my mother and said "This kind of people now invade Çınarcık. These obscurants" She was an old woman and we did not want to start a fight. But why treat us as if we were less than human… So weird.
> (Focus group, İstanbul, February 12, 2009).

The recurrent theme in Ülkü's and Meryem's experiences is being scolded on the base of the assumption that a museum of modern art, an upscale district like Etiler, a piercing, or a summer holiday, are all outside of the boundaries of economic and cultural capital within which women with headscarves should remain. Sentences such as 'What are *you* doing *here*?', or 'They are now *invading* this place too[95]', are expressions of the anger aroused by the transgression of these assumed boundaries. The 'invaded space' is a powerful metaphor for unsettled boundaries. At the subtext it is possible to read the assumption that the headscarf is and should remain as a sign of backwardness, lack of education, poverty, inability to keep up with modernization and urbanization. This leads to the expectation that social mobility and education should result in abandoning the headscarf. The expectation taps into the discourse of modernization theory, according to which modernization is supposed to bring about the retreat of religion to the private sphere, and the concomitant disappearance of religious signs from the public sphere. Göle (2010) argues that the visibility of the headscarf on young women in the public sphere disrupts the presumption that the 'religious' is a remnant of the past, whereas the headscarf worn by elder women who do not have a claim on public presence get to be tolerated as it is 'invisible' and does not disrupt temporal boundaries. Haldun Gülalp (2003a) contends that the Turkish modernization project juxtaposes 'religious – secular' dichotomy with

[95] The metaphor of 'invaded space' also requires analysis that underlines how space is defined by contestations of power. For a spatial analysis that traces the headscarf – urban space relationship, see Anna Secor (2002). Secor argues that there are different 'regimes of veiling' that permeate the urban spaces in İstanbul. Whereas in some districts, wearing the headscarf is regarded as undesirable, it may be the norm in others. Indeed, the faultlines dividing different 'regimes of veiling' are closely related to class and status boundaries.

'rural – urban', 'traditional-modern' dichotomies. The headscarf becomes a source of disruption insofar as it questions this dichotomous understanding. In making his point, he resorts to the example that women with headscarves who work in low status jobs such as cleaning jobs in public offices and in universities are tolerated, exactly because they do not threaten the boundaries drawn by such dichotomizations. Both arguments provide insight to the reasons of skeptic reactions aroused by the sight of young women in modern urban spaces: When temporal boundaries, as suggested by Göle, or boundaries produced by dichotomizations, as argued by Gülalp, are transgressed, the reaction is to stress the perceived incoherence in women's attitudes and render them suspect for their motives in putting on the headscarf.

6.2.2. Expectation of Deep Religious Conviction: Headscarf as the 'Project of Perfection'

Fatma Barbarosoğlu, an Islamist intellectual woman writer, in an interview tells an anecdote of a conversation she had with headscarved female students of a religious vocational school (Şişman, 2000). The students complain about having been expelled from a cafe-bar by the disheartening remarks of a waiter. The waiter comes and asks them to leave the cafe bar, arguing that they do not belong to that place, and that they should find somewhere more 'appropriate' for girls with headscarves, in accordance with their lifestyles. The girls are deeply offended, and complain about complete strangers feeling entitled to tell them what kind of a lifestyle they should pursue, and how to behave. Barbarosoglu says she was shocked at their story, not because the girls were expelled from the cafe bar,

but because they felt the need to even go to that kind of a cafe bar, where alcohol is served as well as coffee and tea. She says she tried to explain the girls that the waiter was actually pointing them to the right direction.

In this story, the waiter is apparently displaying a headscarf skeptic reaction. The subtext of his reaction arguably reads, "If you are claiming religiosity by wearing the headscarf, then why are you transgressing the limits that you should voluntarily set on yourself?" The more interesting part in the story is that Barbarosoglu actually agrees with him; indeed, the girls should wilfully refrain from alcohol serving cafe-bars. Whereas the waiter is acting upon skepticism of the relation between religiosity and the headscarf, Barbarosoğlu confirms that such a relation is essential for coherence.

Barbarosoglu further argues that the practice of wearing a headscarf should be a part of a 'project of perfection' (Şişman, 2000, p.15), referring to a necessity that a woman who wears a headscarf should also undertake the load to design her life according to Islamic precepts, and underline her difference from secular women in the public realm:

> Today, when you cover your head, you are declaring to yourself and to the others that you are standing against the flow. Then some people ask you: Since you do not join the flow, what is it that you know? What is it that you know, and what is it that I do not know? People expect an answer to this question. Yet, the answer should not only be given in words. The answer should be embedded in the entirety of your life. (Şişman, 2000: 22)

She continues with the contention that a woman with a headscarf, who is visible in the public sphere should never forget that every attitude she displays is attributed to all other women with headscarves. Hence the necessity of 'perfection'. The choice to spend leisure time in an alcohol serving cafe bar

punctures perfection because from Barbarosoglu's point of view, it stands in a contradictory relation to the practice of wearing the headscarf. Elsewhere, she complains about women with headscarves who speak street jargon and blame them for inability to internalize the meaning of *tesettür* (Barbarosoglu, 2009). Arguably, Barbarosoglu perceives a *lack of coherence* between their headscarves and their attitudes, and it makes her uncomfortable.

The kind of 'perfection' Barbarosoğlu expects from women with headscarves reflects the widely acknowledged argument that Islamic faith is not just about what one believes, but rather about organizing one's life in accordance with the commands of religion (Smith, 1981; Esposito, 1991). Therefore, cultivating an Islamic way of living is crucial (Saktanber 2002). Barbarosoğlu's use of the concept 'the project of perfection' is a crystallized expression of the expectation that the headscarf should connote such a deeply rooted cultivation of religiosity that it should embrace and permeate one's life to its core. Saktanber points out the crucial question that those who define themselves as 'conscious Muslims' deal with: The question is 'how should we live?'

> To be a conscious Muslim, one's entire life should be led in entire accordance with Islamic precepts..... In other words, as in the case of the Muslims in contemporary secular Turkey, they must create their own Islamic patterns of living concerning the requirements of the society in which they have to live. (Saktanber, 2002: 164)

The tension here is between living in a 'secular Turkey' and creating an Islamic way of life, hence protecting a sense of difference. Saktanber (2002) suggests that this sense of difference is reinforced by the injury/pride dichotomy that is shaping religious Muslim women's identity as 'the other' in Turkey: Injury stems from the accusation of being 'obscuranists', whereas pride stems from the

feeling of 'being on the true path': "The meaning of being a non-secularized Muslim in contemporary Turkey also implies a certain pride, born out of the sense of being close to the essential, in other words, a sense of being on the true path" (Saktanber 2002: 28).

Barbarosoglu's use of the ambiguous yet apt phrase 'standing against the flow' speaks to the need to protect this sense of difference. The phrase highlights a necessity that a woman with a headscarf should display an indisputable difference which will distinguish her from 'others', 'the ones who go with the flow', and set her aside from the corrupting influences of modern life. As Barbarosoglu contends elsewhere (2009), this difference could refer to everyday practices such as resisting the temptations of conspicuous consumption, jealously protecting religious rituals to counter the secularization of everyday life, and abiding by the Islamic codes regulating gender relations. Yet, beneath these expectations lies the expectation that the headscarf should indicate a declaration of 'having already chosen' religious principles as the primary source of guidance. To put in other words, the headscarf is supposed to connote a 'sense of irreversibility' (Saktanber 2002: 54), a declaration that the person wearing it has made an irreversible choice to commit herself to the commands of her faith. As Saktanber argues, this sense of irreversibility makes the headscarf 'the stamp of a specific otherness' (2002: 54).

It is important to emphasize at this point that such loaded connotations attributed to the headscarf end up in categorizing women with headscarves, those who are conscious about religion, thus can keep up with these connotations, and those who cannot. Barbarosoğlu hence creates a distinction between women who

cover with ‘familial choice’, meaning by the indoctrination of their families, and those who deserve credit for ‘covering with an ontological stance’:

> You cannot declare an ontological stance just by wearing the headscarf. It (attitude) has to be in harmony with the clothing, in order to invoke the expected influence. When there is no harmony between the language of the body and language of the clothing, you look either banal or funny... Some see the headscarf on their mothers and relatives. The girl opens up her eyes and sees the headscarf, goes to a religious vocational school. She never questions what is happening around. The headscarf, for her, is like a part of the head, rather than a choice on how to stand in life..... Just like she puts on the headscarf due to her family, she wears tight jeans or skirts with deep slits just because others wear it too. (Şişman 2000: 87-88)

Barbarosoğlu’s expectations from women with headscarves and the categorization she makes on the base of the ability to fulfil them, echoes the tendencies of demanding coherence that are so strong in headscarf skeptic discourses. They are particularly interesting for the purposes of this chapter, as they incorporate various dimensions of the expectations that the participants of this research found constraining, even frustrating at some points. Within the narratives of the participants who contributed to this research, it is possible to trace a pattern of complaints about how they were expected to abide by certain ‘standards’ of religiosity, formulated rather aptly as ‘standing against the flow’ by Barbarasoglu. They were unhappy with expectations, in some cases because they found it impossible to ‘stand against the flow’, and in some cases because they simply did not want to.

6.2.3. Headscarf as Identity Marked by Cultural Difference

Whereas Barbarosoglu suggests that women with headscarves should be ‘different’ due to a coherent and deep religious conviction, hence locates

'difference' in faith and piety, a prominent line of sociological studies locate the source of 'difference' in a rather modern concern with the assertion of identity (Göle, 1993, 1997a, 1997b, 2003, 2010; Özdalga, 1998; Çayır, 2000; Suman, 2000; Çınar, 2008; İlyasoğlu 1994, 1998) This line of argumentation, which I analyzed in depth in Chapter 2, is situated in a line of scholarship that emphasizes the demand for the recognition of cultural differences as opposed to the'difference – blindness' of the Western based model of allegedly 'universal' and 'neutral' norms of existence (Taylor, 1994; Young, 1990). In this framework, the Western based model of 'universal' is criticized for its homogenizing, exclusionary aspects as well as the ways in which it establishes the particularities of privileged groups as 'universal norms' (Young, 1990, 2007). The tension between 'identity – difference' vs. 'universal' is a focal point of discussion in the multiculturalism debate (Taylor, 1994; Scott, 1992; Benhabib, 1999). Points of conflict arising from the encounters of Muslim immigrants in their host countries with regard to cultural and religious difference, especially in Western European contexts[96], is among the prominent issues that the multiculturalism debate deals with. Issues related to gender relations, especially the situation of women among Muslim immigrant communities is a focal point of discussion (Okin, 1999)[97].

[96]Especially countries with significant numbers of Muslim immigrants such as France, Germany, and the Netherlands deal with the issue of how to incorporate cultural and religious difference. Therefore, these countries are under the spotlight of academia especially with regards to how the limits of liberal democratic societies are being 'tested' with cultural and religious difference. How the issue of women in Muslim communities and the headscarf are being handled in Western contexts has become one of the prominent issues through which liberal democracies are being tested for their limits of inclusion. For detailed analysis in the case of France, see Scott (2007), Bowen (2007), Göle (2012). For comparative perspectives, see Rosenberger and Sauer (2012).
[97]Susan Moller Okin's book, "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?" (1999) opened up a heated discussion over the question of how to incorporate gender regimes based on segregation or

The concepts and frameworks derived from the multiculturalism debate have been employed in analyzing the Islamic – secular divide in Turkey, attributing particular significance to the headscarf issue. Accordingly, the headscarf is taken as the constantly visual, thus most outstanding assertion of religious difference and identity that displays and challenges the homogenizing and exclusionary aspects of the norm-setting, homogenizing and exclusionary aspects of the modern, secular public sphere (Göle, 2010, 1997a; Çayır, 2000; Suman, 2000). In Chapters 1 and 2, I analyzed how this theoretical framework loads the headscarf with a mission of symbolizing Islamic difference and identity, and how it constitutes women with headscarves as a 'group'. In this chapter, my particular question is how this 'mission' and 'groupness' becomes a source of assumptions that women with headscarves are expected to live up to.

Viewing the headscarf as a modern assertion of identity and a claim to be 'different', attributes a heavy load to women with headscarves in the sense that their headscarves are supposed to connote a 'mark of difference' and a 'will to diverge' from women who do not wear it. For example, Göle states that the wearers of the modern, urban headscarf consciously underline Islamic difference through their use of the headscarf, and 'sharpen their identity by labeling themselves Islamists' (1997 b: 89). Elsewhere, she also underscores that women with headscarves are underlining the transformation from Muslims to 'Islamists' by voluntarily adopting a stigma symbol and by making religiosity 'offensively visible' in the public sphere (Göle, 2003: 815).

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inequality of sexes within the fold of multicultural societies, a debate which upholds its popularity today, only more heatedly in the post 9/11 world.

The role of the headscarf in terms of putting the 'mark of difference' on those who wear it, has been critically analyzed before with regard to how it subjugates women to the categorizing public gaze (Çınar, 2008). Çınar focuses on the political level and argues that women with headscarves have been subjugated to the public gaze as the headscarf has been declared by the Islamist political elite as 'the symbol of struggle of Islam against secularism' (Çınar, 2008: 907). This polarization at the political level[98] has powerful reflections at the cultural level, as well. The headscarf is also located at the center of a 'cultural struggle' argued to be going on between two designated poles: Islamic and secularist portions of society. In this scene of polarization, women with headscarves have been given a role as the bearers of the Islamic identity and as the prominent[99] actors demanding the recognition of cultural difference contoured by dictates of Islam.

The way in which this frame distinguishes and differentiates two 'categories' of women with headscarves requires critical attention. Young, urban women are given expressed priority in analysis, for they are viewed as almost the activists of a new social movement with their identity claims and the confident, consistent ways in which they construct and defend that identity. These women are neatly and carefully seperated from those who wear the headscarf out of 'traditional' reasons, such as family pressure or patriarchal concerns with modesty. The best of scholarly attention that the second group receives is to be

[98]For a criticism of the construction of a political polarization as Islamists vs. secularists, see Demiralp (2012). Demiralp suggests a deconstruction of this polarization in order to look behind the "ideological surface" and analyze the relations of power in society, focusing on the urban – provincial divide.

[99]For example, Göle argues that "covered women's movement" forms the "most radical, the hardest seed of the Islamist movement" (1993: 83).

explained away as being a remnant of the past, withering in the new generations. There are manifold questions and criticisms to be raised against such a neat categorization: Should we not critically engage with the neat categorical separation between 'covering for the defense of identity' and 'covering as a traditional practice'? What kind of distinctions permeated with power are produced with this categorization? What are their implications for the reproduction of class and status boundaries?

The findings of the research necessitate a rethinking of such categorization by revealing how the headscarf is located at the crossrods of various negotiations revolving around piety, class, status, and gender identity. The assumption that young, urban women with headscarves are supposed to be acting upon a transformative and subversive defence of their identity and difference (that is, if they are not 'unconscious, traditional' veilers), falls short of explaining these negotiations.

6.3. Responses in Participant Narratives

In the introduction to this chapter, I delineated my concerns about the culturalization of the headscarf: Insofar as it is seen as the mark of cultural difference, women with headscarves are expected to be resorting exclusively to 'Islamic culture' in making their choices in life. Anything other than that gets to be labelled as incoherent and questioned for sincerity and authenticity. These concerns, which constitute one of the major themes of this dissertation, have their sources in the narratives of research participants, which bring into light their

desire to be ‘unmarked’ and to have the chance to incorporate different sources of references in their identities, without being judged as ‘incoherent’.

6.3.1. ‘My Religiosity is a Teaspoonful’: Grades of Covering and Religiosity

Pınar was among the participants of the research who voiced discontent with the difficulty of fulfilling the expectations of coherence that are bestowed on her because of the headscarf. She was a 23-year-old married woman selling lingerie at a narrow counter in the entrance of a crowded and lively arcade in Kayseri. She seemed to have a conviction that the expectations raised by the headscarf sometimes contradicted the necessities of business:

> People expect covered women to be honest all the time. Maybe because they think our religious conviction is stronger. They do not want us to lie at all. Of course I do not lie, but there may be times when I do not tell the full truth. For example, if there is a cheaper product and a more expensive one and they are both of the same quality, I try to sell the more expensive one. This is called business. We are doing business here. I grew up in this business, and this is how I learned. (In depth interview, Kayseri, March 2009)

Pınar’s honest declaration reflects her frustration with the gap between what people expect her to be and the flexibility she needs in order to ‘do business’. This gap has been voiced by many other participants, who thought that displaying a ‘perfect religiosity’ was expected only from them, and not from men who would call themselves religious Muslims. Moreover, what constitutes ‘perfect religiosity’ was defined without taking into account their experiences. It was as if the visibility of the headscarf made them responsible for leading an

Islamic life and setting examples of how to be a religious Muslim, a responsibility that they found constraining.

Fatmagül, a 26 year-old interviewee working in a shop selling scarves in Ankara, explained how she felt obliged to fit into the expectation that she should be fasting during Ramadan:

> I cannot fast, there is medication I have to take everyday. I try to look as if I were fasting. I take my medicine secretly. My friends at work are aware of the situation, but strangers would think it is odd, that is why I am doing this secretly. In our society, there is such an assumption: A woman with a headscarf cannot smoke, cannot chew a gum in public. It is hard to break this idea, it has become a stereotype, a label even. I feel intimidated, after all the society has labelled us this way. (In depth interview, Ankara, February 2009)

Fatmagül strikingly describes the idea that women with headscarves should fast as a 'stereotype'. She is taking pains to fit into this stereotype, for she does not want to make herself vulnerable to questions about her motives: Why are you covering your head, and if you are covering your head, why are you not performing the commands of religion? Fatma, another interviewee working in a jewellery store in Kayseri, thought that it was stereotypical to think that women with headscarves should perform the prayers:

> Fatma: Uncovered women have this idea: They think that if a woman is wearing the headscarf, then she does everything that religion necessitates. This is not true. Not all covered women perform the prayers. And there are uncovered women who do. I think this is not related to clothing or the headscarf. Everyone should live religion as they see fit.
> - So not all covered women perform the prayers?
> Fatma: No, they don't. This is a prejudice. Not all covered women are necessarily religious. I mean, yes, all right, of course they are trying to do God's will but... as I said, not everyone does everything perfectly. This is a prejudice. And we should not think that uncovered women do not abide by God's commands. Because there are also uncovered women who recognize God and Quran."
> (In depth interview, Kayseri, March 2009)

The findings of the research point out that one of the most popular ways of responding to expectations of the devotion to cultivate 'perfect religiosity' is to mitigate the connotations loaded on the headscarf by arguing that some women's ways of covering may refer to a 'very religious' identity, but not theirs. This response surfaces in narratives which develop a fragmented conception of the practice of covering defined in terms of 'degrees'. According to this conception, only some women are 'fully covered' (*tam kapali*). This concept of 'fully covered' is used in participants' narratives to refer to women who exclusively wear long overcoats, big headscarves, or chadors, and who avoid interaction with men. More often than not, the participants of the research tended to distance themselves from the 'fully covered', and sometimes referred to themselves as 'half covered' as opposed to 'fully covered'.

One of the participants who emphasized her distinction from the 'fully covered' was Zarife, an 18 year old single woman working in a pastry shop in İstanbul, Bayrampasa. She had donned the headscarf at the age of 11, and emphasized that she wears the headscarf 'only for God' as opposed to those 'who just want to show off with their headscarves', or those who cover 'because of family pressure'. Before the pastry shop, she had worked as an assistant in a pharmacy for two years, but when the pharmacy went out of business, her job applications to other pharmacies were turned down. She strongly believes that she was discriminated against due to the headscarf. She was very sore about this, because she thought that working in a pastry shop was a loss of status compared to working in a pharmacy. As a young single woman who wanted to find her future husband herself and not through arranged marriage, she was disappointed

with boys of her age who would refrain from talking to her, shaking her hand, or even making eye contact as they assumed she would stay away from friendship with boys. Although she granted that the headscarf protected her against harrassment to a certain extent, and opened up prospects for more 'serious' relationships likely to culminate in marriage, she also complained that it pushed some eligible young men away, 'as if she had leper'. She emphasized that she wanted to have a boyfriend, liked socializing, going to cafes, seeing movies. She especially complained that her uncovered friends expected her to 'do the right thing out of the fear of God' all the time, as they thought it was a duty bestowed on her by her headscarf, although they themselves did not feel under such an obligation. She had a particularly memorable way of formulating the degree of her religiosity:

> Zarife: My religiosity is still a teaspoonful.
> -Why, what does that mean?
> If it were a tablespoonful… I mean if I had devoted myself to my religion completely, if I had not been working, I could have done it with a tablespoon. I could even have done it with a ladle. But I cannot imagine myself in a chador.
> - So being religious with a ladle means wearing the chador?
> Yes, with the face veil and gloves and all. They do not talk to men. That seems a little ridiculous. I would not like to be like that. Actually the ones who wear the chador also go out to shop, they go to the marketplaces and there are men there. But when you go to their houses, they would say 'I do not sit with men, I will stay in the back room'... They eat at separate tables. My cousins also wear the chador, but I never think like them.
> - Then you are happy with your teaspoonful of religiosity?
> - Yes I am, very happy.
> - And you want to go on like this?
> - Maybe I could do a little more than the teaspoon. But not too much more… I would not take on the chador. Imagine when it is summer, the sun will come out, it gets so hot (chuckles). (In depth interview, İstanbul, May 2009)

Zarife associates a 'tablespoonful of religiosity' with covering fully, including face veil, and avoiding interaction with men. Relating 'fully covering' to being 'very religious', and distancing themselves from this level of religiosity, was quite common in the participant narratives. One important theme was to find a 'middle ground' in the level of religiosity and the degree of covering. In the story of Bilge, this effort to find the middle ground was particularly underlined. She was a single woman in her 20's, working in a small women's clothing shop in Ankara. She explained that she took the university entrance exams twice, but could not succeed. Getting away from her small town was very important for her because most of her cousins and friends were off to big cities for university education. As there were not too many jobs in the town, she had no option but be a 'house girl' (ev kızı). Therefore, she convinced her parents to let her live in Ankara with her cousin, who was a university student and her four housemates. She recounted her experience with the private tutoring institution where she took courses to prepare for the university exam in her town. She described the management and the teachers of the training center as 'Nurcu'[100], and explained that the teachers took special care of her especially after she decided to wear a headscarf. However, Bilge soon started to be uncomfortable with the teachers' attention, which she found too invasive. She was invited to stay at student houses to study intensely, however she felt like being forced into performing the prayers in these study camps. She was alienated, not because she did not like performing the prayers, but as she thought that the teachers were trying to cover up their

[100] 'Nurcu' refers to the followers of the religious leader Said Nursi, who lived in Turkey in the first half of 20th century.

actual objectives, which was, according to Bilge, inculcating their own interpretation of religion. She explained that only female teachers helped female students, and that they were all very careful about gender segregation and covering themselves. Her sensitivity about 'finding the middle ground' was apparently cultivated in contrast to the image that the teachers of the training center conveyed:

> Bilge: They have such a boring life... They really do (laughs)
> - How so?
>
> They cover themselves extremely. Overcoats... I am against this redundant covering. I am against the chador, I do not like it. Maybe overcoats can be worn elegantly but they were also covering their mouths...
> - Is this only about their clothes, or is there something in their lives that you don't like?
>
> Their lives of course. Men and women are always in seperate places. In my family, there is no such segregation. Not talking to men, not even talking to relatives, this kind of stuff is so weird and not nice. Privacy should be protected, that is true, but running away from men is not nice.
> - Now I understand that the decision to put on the headscarf is an important decision in your life. Do you remember the day when you first took the decision to cover your head?
>
> Well, now, this comes from my religiosity. The Quran commands it. Some people say it is not written in the Quran... maybe, I have not read it, I don't know, my decision is also related to my family, women in my family are covered. It is God's command. You have to abide by this rule. I don't know how correctly I cover. For example they say, 'do not wear tight clothes, don't show yourself'. But sometimes you wear something and you just shine, you stand out. I think it should be up to each person's decision.
> - For example you look very chic in these clothes.
>
> Exactly, but they say we should not look like this, we should not stand out. We should not attract attention, men should not be looking at us. How much I obey that rule, I am not sure.
> Do you want to obey this rule?
> No! (she laughs) I don't! Because I am comfortable this way, this is enough. I cover my head, I obey God's command, I am careful about my clothing, I don't wear mini skirts, I don't show much flesh.
> So you have inner peace and you feel modest enough.
> Exactly For example my cousin is also covered, but she wears tight clothes. Unlike me, she wears trousers and does not wear long tops. As I said, this issue of covering changes from person to person..... But yes, some people even wear short skirts under the headscarf. That does not

look good to me either. If you cover your head, you should also be wearing something long, at least.

- As far as I understand, you don't like to be too much covered. But you don't like it the opposite way either.

Exactly. For me, it is important to find a way in the middle."
(In depth interview, Ankara, May 2009)

In Bilge's narrative, 'fully covered' women and 'covered women wearing short skirts' symbolize the extreme poles of the large array of styles of covering. The image that she wants to convey is an attractive, yet modest and 'ladylike' woman. Like Zarife, she maps the practice of covering on a metaphorical line with two poles. Being 'too much covered' and 'too rigidly religious' are at the one pole, whereas 'exposing too much flesh despite the headscarf' is at the other pole. The theme of 'finding a middle ground' without compromising religiosity, modesty, attractiveness, or personal style, is a very popular theme that stand out in the participant narratives. Yet, attempts to find this middle ground frequently meet judgemental comments and pressures coming from various angles. One participant who felt overwhelmed with such pressures was Ayşe, a 26 year old single woman working in a pastry shop in İstanbul, in the district of Çıksalın. Çıksalın is a district situated on the outskirts of one of the most central districts of İstanbul, namely Beyoğlu. Yet, it rather looks like a small town, with narrow and neglected streets, outworn adjacent buildings and small, untended shops selling groceries, pastries or cheap clothing items. It is home to many lower middle class families, most of whom have migrated from Eastern Turkey. The pastry shop where Ayşe was working, was one of the busy shops in the district. Ayşe was living in Çıksalın with her mother and her brother. Her father was dead long ago, and she and her brother had been working since they were children to make ends

meet. She was a notably good looking woman, wearing her headscarf in a very unusual style, with all the material summoned on top of her head made into a big stylish bun, and her neck was not covered. Like the participants cited above, Ayşe also described herself as 'half covered', as opposed to her 'fully covered' mother and relatives, who were wearing the chador. In her story, it was evident that her style of putting on the headscarf made her the focus of attention among her relatives and neighbors.

> Ayşe: I have relatives living around here. They see me working here. Then they go to my mother and brother with rumors and complaints. I overheard my brother tell my mother to put pressure on me. 'You will tell Ayşe to buy herself an overcoat. She has to wear an overcoat, she has to put on her headscarf decently.' (In depth interview, İstanbul, February 2009)

Her brother's effort to make her 'cover properly' is only one part of the remarks made on her covering style. There are also people, customers and friends, advising her to take off her headscarf, as she was not 'properly covered' anyway:

> Ayşe: In summer, I also wear much lighter clothes. Actually, it is not right to dress like this. After all, if I am wearing this scarf, I should not be dressing this way. But this is totally about the nefs. My nefs does not accept to cover my neck and wear heavy clothes in summer. Because it is warm in summer, but also because there are so nice fashionable clothes in shops. I am tempted to to wear those clothes. Actually I should not be tempted, but I am... There are also people who tell me, 'You are not really covered, so why don't you just take off that headscarf?' I cannot do that. I cannot take of my headscarf. I would feel like naked. I know I do not live Islam properly. But I cannot take off my headscarf. (In depth interview, İstanbul, February 2009)

Ayşe's narrative depicts clearly the position of being stuck between her preference to cover in an unusual style, which she formulates as dictated by her 'nefs', referring to bodily and material desires, and the expectations of coherence coming from two different angles, advising her to cover more, or to take off the

headscarf. The constant tension in her narrative unfolding between her 'nefs' and her will to control and manage it[101], is intensified by contrasting expectations on how she should conduct herself. She was also very sore about the remark she heard from a customer, a young man who frequented the pastry shop, apparently out of romantic interest. She said they had long conversations and developed a friendship, which was scarred by the young man's remark. He said that before he met Ayşe, he had hated women with headscarves to such an extent that he felt like 'vomiting' when he saw one, as he thought they were wearing it as a political symbol. Ayşe reacted by saying that the only thing her headscarf symbolized was her conviction in Islam. However, the scrutinies for coherence, as well as the young man's headscarf skeptic remark, all pushed her into an effort to explain did. During the interview, when she told me that she did not perform the prayers and had not read the Quran, her attitude was shy, even apologetic, as she assumed that I would also blame her for incoherence:

> Ayşe: Probably you will not like to hear this from a covered person. Because as far as I have seen, people do not like to hear such things from a covered woman. They say 'you are covered, so why don't you know your religion better'.

Unlike Zarife, who declares confidently that her religiosity is 'the size of a teaspoon', and Bilge, who says she feels comfortable with her 'way in the

[101] The concept of 'nefs' refers to bodily and material desires. The concept came up in many other interviews, especially with regard to how controlling and managing the 'nefs' was necessitated by Islam. We should note that 'managing' the nefs does not exclusively mean just suppressing it, but also manipulating and 'educating' it. For example, one participant argued that colorful headscarves were useful as they appealed to women's 'nefs', and enabled the decision to put on the headscarf. Gökarıksel and Secor (2012) discuss the contradiction between the nefs and *tesettür* fashion, and argue that "veiling-fashion both tempts nefis (by stoking desires of various kinds) and becomes employed in the spatial and bodily administration of these unruly desires" (Gökarıksel and Secor 2012, p. 11).

middle', Ayşe is taking pains to explain that even though she cannot perform religion as well as 'expected', and even though her nefs does not let her cover her neck, these should not be taken as grounds to question her religiosity, her modesty, or her determination in wearing the headscarf.

6.3.2. Negotiating the Headscarf: Piety in the Inside vs. Headscarf on the Outside

In all three participants' narratives cited above, the common point is that they do not take uncovering as an option as they thought of it as an inseperable part of their religious conviction. This was not the case with all the research participants. Some participants thought that the headscarf could be negotiated, especially in order to find employment in higher status jobs.

Selin, a 21-year old single woman working in a *tesettür* store in Denizli, was one of them. Selin was disappointed with the status of her job as her real aspiration was to become a policewoman, and she was ready to take off her headscarf in order to reach that aspiration. She took the exams to become a policewoman, but failed. Afterwards, she took off her headscarf in order to work in a private security company. However, she realized that the job in that private security company did not offer any career prospects, and the working conditions were horrible, therefore was 'not worth uncovering'. Following her 15 day experience at the security company, she put back on her headscarf and applied for her current job in the *tesettür* chain store, where she was immediately hired. She feels lucky to have found a sales job in a *tesettür* chain store, which has much better conditions than sales jobs in small scale retailers. This job pays almost as

well as the job in the private security company, and she has social security as well. While explaining her choice of uncovering for a job that is 'worth it', she referred to her religiosity as 'belief in the inside':

> Selin: My dream was to be a policewoman. I took the exams. For those exams I took my headscarf off, I even had to show my legs and arms of course, because in those interviews they have to look at your body… You have to do this stuff to become someone.
> - You did not become a policewoman?
> No, I could not pass the exams.
> - But if you became one, you would take off your headscarf?
> Of course I would. My family may be covered people but **we are not of those people who think that religion is in the headscarf. It is something inside of you. It is not about covering on the outside, it is about belief in the inside.** My parents actually said this at the beginning, when I first started to cover my head. They said, covering is not the only thing about religiosity. If you believe in religion, you don't have to cover your head. In today's conditions, to be able to become someone, you have to make some concessions... But for the private security company, well I worked there for 15 days, the wage and benefits I got there were not better than what they give me in this store (the *tesettür* store where she currently works). Then why should I make a concession? Please do not misunderstand me. I am not measuring the headscarf or the necessities of religion with money or career. But if I will make a concession, I should at least be able to say that I gave up on the headscarf for something important and big. (In depth interview, Denizli, June 2009)

Selin did not want to be misunderstood as someone who bargains her religiosity for a career. Therefore, in her narrative it is possible to see the effort to break the perceived link between religiosity and the headscarf in order to make the point that taking off the headscarf does not mean compromising religiosity. This is why she distances herself from those 'who think that religion is in the headscarf', and formulates her religiosity as 'belief in the inside'. The tendency to decouple 'piety in the inside' and 'headscarf on the outside' came to the fore in many other interviews and focus groups. One of the issues that fuelled the discussion was the headscarf ban in the universities, which was still in effect

during a large part of the fieldwork. In the focus group conducted in Gaziantep, there was a heated debate on whether it was 'a sin' to take off the headscarf or not.

> Selma: Look, we have covered girls. They take it off while entering the school, and then they put it back on. Noone can say that uncovered women are less honorable. Just because we wear the headscarf does not mean we are better. It is not related to sin or sevap (merit) either. That is your personal idea!
> Gülay: Why, how can you say that! Of course there is something called sin!
> Selma: Then perform your prayers, read your Quran! It is not about covering or uncovering. I would never tell my daughter to cover her head. Even if she does, she can get her education. She can uncover at work, she can cover after work! This is my idea. What else can she do after getting all that education.
> Gülay: I would go abroad if I could. The headscarf is not a problem anywhere else. But in a Muslim country, it becomes a problem! So many young girls' lives were ruined!
> Selma: Yes, but not everyone can go abroad.
> (Focus group, Gaziantep, February 2009)

Selma's statements are in line with Selin's, as both are refusing the view that the headscarf is an inseperable part of religiosity. In their narratives, the headscarf is a contingent item that can be negotiated for better education or career prospects, or in Selin's words, 'to become someone'. The contingency of the headscarf and the possibility that it could be taken off, was repeated in many other in depth interviews and focus groups. More importantly, some participant narratives, as exemplified in Selin's and Selma's words, reveal a tendency to locate the practice of covering as 'exterior' to the self, whereas piety is located seperately as an 'interior' aspect of the self.

In her critically acclaimed study *Politics of Piety*, Saba Mahmood (2005) argues that ritual religious performances are disciplinary acts to produce the pious

self. Through her study of the women taking part in the 'mosque movement' in Egypt, she challenges the distinction between 'the interior' and 'the exterior', for she takes exterior acts of religiosity as pedagogical and disciplinary means to reach the state of inner piety. Hence she formulates religious rituals as 'exteriority as a means to interiority' (Mahmood: 134). From this point of view, she locates the performance of head covering as a ritual act to educate the body towards developing inner piety and a 'modest deportment' (Mahmood: 158) in line with the commands of religion.

> ... Bodily acts – like wearing the veil or conducting oneself modestly in interactions with people (especially men)- do not serve as manipulable masks in game of public representation, detachable from an essential interiorized self. Rather they are **critical markers** of piety as well as **the ineluctable means** by which one trains oneself to be pious. While wearing the veil serves at first as a means to tutor oneself in the attribute of shyness, it is also simultaneously integral to the practice of shyness: one cannot simply discard the veil once a modest deportment has been acquired, because the veil itself is part of what defines that deportment (emphasis original) (Mahmood 2005: 158).

Selin's and Selma's narratives, in which they distinguish 'belief in the inside' vs. 'headscarf on the outside' stand in sharp contrast to Mahmood's argument that bodily acts like wearing the headscarf play a role as the 'ineluctable means by which one trains oneself to be pious'. To the contrary, while opening up a space in which it is possible to negotiate taking off the headscarf for higher status jobs or for university education, they point to the opposite direction: The headscarf is located as an 'exterior' practice that is not essentially inseperable from what they define as 'interior' attributes of the self, such as piety and modesty. The discussion between Selma and Gülay taps into this discussion on whether the headscarf is or is not seperable from piety: By underlining that taking

off the headscarf is a sin, Gülay reacts to Selma's formulation decoupling piety and the headscarf.

However, in analyzing Selin's and Selma's narratives, it is of utmost importance to pay attention to the context within which taking off the headscarf is negotiated. The negotiations for uncovering are embedded in the negotiations to attain the aspired level of education or a more secure and high status employment compared to sales work. As Selin expresses, in order to become a policewoman, which she regards as a very high status job, she is ready to uncover. Once she fails in the exams and loses that opportunity, she again takes off her headscarf for the job at the private security company. But when the job turns out to be less secure and less desirable than she had envisioned, she decides that it is not worth making a concession on the headscarf. Selma, the participant who was cited above for explaining that she wants her daughter to uncover occasionally for higher education and a high status job, thinks that it is both impossible and undesirable to uncover when it comes to herself and women like herself, who are not likely to have better chances of employment:

> Selma: If a woman with a headscarf takes it off after she starts to work, it implies shameful things. Excuse me but they would say, 'She became a shameless woman when she started to work'. For example this lady (pointing to another participant of the focus group) cannot take off her headscarf. It is impossible. For example my sister does not wear the headscarf, she works as cleaning staff in an auto repair shop. People are used to her as uncovered from the start. But I cannot uncover once I am covered. If I did, people in my neighbourhood would despise me. They would say 'Selma started to work, and she does shameful things. There are men there. So why are you opening up now? Covered for so many years, why are you uncovering now?
> - So it would not be a problem to cover after starting to work, but it would be a problem to uncover?
>
> Selma: Yes of course it would be a problem.

Fadime: They would say 'she lost herself[102]'.
(Focus group, Gaziantep, February 2009)

On the one hand, Selma thinks it would be very possible and acceptable if her young daughter uncovered for prospects of higher education and public employment, which she regards very highly compared to her own insecure and underpaid sales job. However, as a 39-year-old elementary school graduate, who sees no prospects to find a higher status job than her current job, thinks it is not an option to take off the headscarf. What makes uncovering nonnegotiable for her, is less an inner conviction about the link between religiosity and the headscarf, than a concern about possible rumours that would put her modesty in question.

Many other participants drew attention to the point that after having put on the headscarf, taking it off would make a woman vulnerable to reactions from family, relatives, neighbours. One focus group participant in Ankara put this succinctly as 'our family circle cannot handle uncovering'. Yet, how uncovering would be 'handled', or whether it would be taken as a compromise of modesty, was also relational and dependent on the context of the prospects that uncovering implies in terms of employment.

- What would your family do if you decided to take off the headscarf?
Mürvet: Let's say there is a teaching job or a public office job. For example I have a cousin, my aunt's daughter. She is a public officer. She covers outside, uncovers when she goes to work. If you have a decent job like that, nobody would say anything against taking off the headscarf. But if I were to take it off for a sales job like this one, everybody would react. And besides, I would not want to do that either.
(In depth interview, İstanbul, May 2009)

The narratives higlight a significant process of negotiation in which decisions related to taking on and off the headscarf are considered in relation to

[102] The expression 'She lost herself' (the exact wording that the participant Fadime used was 'Kendi kendini yitirmiş') connotes having lost moral boundaries and moral direction.

the prospects of status available to women. Modesty is the central concept in these negotiations. Almost every research participant was concerned about the possibility of being regarded as 'immodest'. However, the narratives highlight the relationality of modesty with regard to a hierarchy of different levels of education and employment a woman can possibly attain. Accordingly, taking off the headscarf could lead to the questioning of modesty if the woman wearing it is far from prospects of better employment and the higher status that comes with it. Yet it would less likely be regarded as an 'immodest' attempt to take off the headscarf, if it were framed as a concession given for a higher status job.

In these narratives, the headscarf is constructed as a contingent practice that does not define one's identity. The participants cited above are invested in countering the perception that the headscarf is inseparable from piety and modesty. Rather, they locate piety and modesty as 'interior' attributes to the self, as opposed to the 'exteriority' of the practice of wearing the headscarf. Therefore, they argue that piety and modesty should not be harmed or rendered questionable by ceasing to wear the headscarf. It is notable how this emphasis on the 'exterior/interior' distinction resonates with the secular notion of relegating religion to the realm of the private, and rendering it a personal affair. The second significant dimension in the narratives concerns the role of the headscarf in women's negotiations of modesty and ways of existence in the labour market. Whereas locating the headscarf as 'exterior' to the self makes it possible to negotiate it, participants refer to their aspirations of higher status jobs and the concessions that *have to be* made, in order to explain the context within which it can be negotiated. The participants cited above underlined that it was not their

desire to take off their headscarves unless there were substantial prospects for upward social mobility.

Indeed, this dimension should be analyzed within the history of the headscarf ban in the universities, and the headscarf ban in public sector jobs which is still in effect. Moreover, as it has been delineated in the previous chapter, the exclusion of women with headscarves from certain portions of the labour market is not limited to the public sector. Exclusion exists in the private sector labour market in more subtle ways, in the form of viewing women with headscarves as lacking social and cultural capital, and hence locating them as potential workers in less favourable, less secure jobs with lower status. Consequently, the participant narratives highlight that the headscarf gets to be seen as an obstacle when a woman seeks a job of higher status. Yet, this is not the only authoritative discourse shaping women's negotiations on the headscarf. The patriarchal discourses and constraints within which 'being perceived as modest' and the concern with potential rumours becomes central to women's negotiations of working and putting on or off the headscarf.

6.3.3. Headscarf and the Patriarchal Bargain

Whenever patriarchy is uttered in relation to the headscarf, it is usually conceived as sheer family and/or neighbourhood pressure on women to wear the headscarf. However, it is important to note that the participants of this research reacted sharply to these kinds of implications: They emphasized that it was their own decision to wear the headscarf, even though 'there may be others who cover because of other people's pressure'. Pressure, in these narratives was taken as

outright coercion that denied women the agency to decide, and this was the kind of patriarchal pressure that almost all the research participants distanced themselves from. Yet, narratives also point out that patriarchal bargains work in subtle ways in guiding women to take the decision of putting on the headscarf.

One of these subtle ways can be traced in how the headscarf functions in working life, especially in relation to the lack of security and status. At this point, I would like to bring into focus one particular narrative. The experience of the participant under focus here is by no means unique; yet her experience incorporates various layers of the subtle encroachments of patriarchy.

Elmas was a 28 year-old divorced woman living in Kayseri. She explained that the male members of her extended family, her uncles and cousins reacted very harshly to her divorce and denied her approval and protection. Her father had passed away long ago. She had a child and a sick mother in need of care. She suddenly found herself in a vulnerable position: At that time, she was 20 years old, with no income, no education, and no working experience. She had to earn money, and started to work as a waitress; a job that turned out to be temporary due to 'troubles' of harassment and working hours that extended into the night. She narrates those days as an anxious, uncomfortable time of her life.

> I was working in a restaurant as a waitress. There were so many troubles, it was inevitable. How to say… An unfavourable environment for a woman. The working hours also. I worked till late hours in the night. There were all kinds of troubles. (Focus group, Kayseri, March 2009)

In those days, she did not wear a headscarf. She took the decision to don the headscarf when she was 22 years old, a year after finding her current job in a store selling household appliances where her employers and customers are, in her

own words, religious and 'closed people'. She speaks of her current employers with utmost respect and gratitude, for providing her with a permanent job, a secure working environment, and a network of familial support, which she formulates as "They never make me feel like a worker".

> I started to work in this store seven years ago. They first employed me as a cleaning lady. In three months, they also let me try sales. Our customers are usually women. In my first year in this job, I was not wearing a headscarf. Our bosses' lifestyle, other workers' lifestyle, people who come there... they are 'closed' type of people.. But the headscarf is my decision. Since after I donned the headscarf, I have a much more comfortable life. Everybody respects... Since I am covered, I get along better with woman customers. Because they come... with their husbands... When you are open, they get different impressions. When I donned the headscarf, all those impressions disappeared. Now the customers are like relatives, like friends. They see me as one of their family. I feel much happier, comfortable and peaceful. (Focus group, Kayseri, March 2009)

Then she told the story of the day that she decided to wear the headscarf:

> One day, I was watching TV at the workplace. I was listening to a *hodja* speak about the headscarf. I had a black t-shirt on, you know, with short sleeves and all, and a skirt. As I was listening to the *hodja,* a feeling of shame overwhelmed me. I looked into the mirror. I said to myself, 'A shame on you. You have a daughter, you are a mother. It is inappropriate to go around in these revealing clothes'. The very same day, I bought myself a scarf and *tesettür* clothes. The next day, I went to work with my headscarf and new clothes on. Everyone at work was so happy, so happy... That is how I decided, in just one day. (Focus group, Kayseri, March 2009)

In Elmas' experience, the decision to take on the headscarf is a decision that comes within the context of deep insecurities related to class, gender, and vulnerable position in the labor market as an unqualified, uneducated woman. Within her experience, it is possible to trace the points at which all these different layers of insecurities intersect and intermesh with one another. First, after her divorce she is 'excluded' and rendered vulnerable by the patriarchal structure of

her extended family. Second, she grapples with difficulties in her effort to find permanent, gainful employment. In her job as a waitress, she perceives a threatening environment for her integrity and dignity, because a young waitress in need of a job is seen as open to harassment. Finally, in her current job where she finds a relatively secure and peaceful working environment, she tends to idealize this workplace as analogous to the protective shield of a family, where the distinctions and contradictions between employer, employee and customer dissolve into warm and informal relations. At this point, she finds more comfort and peace in wearing the headscarf; that is how she gets rid of that one last bit of distinction between her and what she perceives as the 'secure', 'family like' environment of the workplace.

Her perception of the headscarf as a 'gate to peace and security' is made even clearer in how she narrates the story of a friend:

> I have this friend, she is uncovered. And she is extremely careful about her physical appearance. She always dyes her hair in blond, never goes out without make up and nail polish. She is that kind of a person. She has been looking for a job for four years. And she is very beautiful, 1.70 metres tall, blond, turns heads when she walks on the street. But she can never find a proper job. Whenever she starts a job, at the moment the boss' wife sees her, she is fired. This has been going on for four years. Also, she has a very different lifestyle.
> -What do you mean 'different'?
> I mean she is more extrovert. She has boyfriends, even more than one. She cares about material things very much. She is not accepted anywhere. Just her boyfriends accept her, but only for a short time. Then she comes to me again, in a desperate mood. She says 'Elmas, I want to be like you'. I tell her, 'Cover your head. If you want to be comfortable, if you want a peaceful life, wear a headscarf' She says she would never do that. (Focus group, Kayseri, March 2009)

Elmas' decision to wear the headscarf complicates the dichotomous portrayal of 'voluntary decision' vs. 'patriarchal oppression'. It is her voluntary

decision to wear a headscarf, but if we fail to contextualize this decision within the broader context of intermeshing gendered, economic insecurities, lack of status and patriarchal bargains, we would fall into the trap of an abstract 'voluntarism' stripped of social context.

6.3.4. Blurring Lines Between 'Being Covered' and 'Uncovered'

The tendencies to develop 'graded' narratives of covering, to distance 'their own' headscarves from those of the 'fully covered', and to distinguish the headscarf from meanings of piety and modesty attributed to it, sometimes gestured to an emphasis on blurred lines between the states of wearing and not wearing the headscarf. These 'blurred lines' were especially underlined with reference to the convergence of clothing styles between women with and without headscarves. While many participants underlined their search for a 'middle ground' of covering that would not compromise modesty, it was also emphasized that as trousers became more acceptable, it became 'easier' to wear the headscarf.

> Arife: Now for young girls who have a tradition of headscarf in the family, it has become much easier to wear the headscarf. Because now they can wear everything comfortably.
> - You mean, except for the hair?
>
> Arife: Yes, except for the hair, they can wear everything. It is easier. As they can wear trousers, it is no longer difficult to put on the headscarf. Years ago, it was required that you should wear long skirts, you should wear loose overcoats.
> - So what is the difference between women with and without headscarves?
>
> Ergül: To me there is no difference. I do not feel myself different at all. Are you wearing the headscarf or not? I don't see difference.
> (Focus group, İstanbul, February 2009)

What is being underlined here is that, while the clothing styles of women with and without headscarves has been converging, there remains no need to be making a statement of 'difference' through the headscarf, hence it has become a less demanding endeavour. To put in other words, it is easier to wear the headscarf insofar as its connotation as being an inseparable part of identity fades away. Selin, the participant who formulated religiosity as 'belief in the inside' as opposed to the 'headscarf on the outside', expressed her discontent with being seen 'as if she was born with the headscarf':

> People seem to think that we were born with headscarves. It is so strange… It is a matter of respect, I respect uncovered people and they should respect me. Because this headscarf actually **has no function, it is just something I prefer**. You may put it on or not. And some of those who wear it are not even modest either…. What I mean is that, these are just periods for me: I passed through an uncovered period, now I am in a covered period. (In depth interview, Denizli, June 2009)

Selin's expression of how the headscarf is 'just something she prefers, with no function' is a crystallized expression of a common pattern among research participants' narratives, which points out the tendency to formulate the headscarf as *just a choice* of clothing among many other choices. Zübeyde, a 21 year old married woman selling women's clothes in a clothing shop in Denizli, thought that the headscarf was only an indicator of modesty and 'ladylike behaviour'. She contended that taking it off on some special days would not compromise her modesty, as long as she was careful about her behaviour, and did not wear mini skirts and low-cut blouses.

> I am covered but for example I will take off the headscarf for my sister-in-law's wedding. We are not covered that solidly, me and my family. There are some families… once covered, they do not accept uncovering. That is not the case for me….. This is like a matter of taste. Some like this kind of

skirt, some like it shorter, some like it longer. Covering is like that for me. (In depth interview, Denizli, June 2009)

Similar to Selin, Zübeyde also refers to her headscarf as only a matter of taste, a choice of clothing among many other choices, such as choosing this or that length of a skirt. Actually, the length of skirt is not devoid from socially loaded meanings either. Yet, the point is that, both Selin and Zübeyde tend to stay away from any 'load' attributed to the headscarf, which may result in rendering them 'different' from what they perceive as the mainstream and socially accepted norms of modest womanhood. Instead of underlining and highlighting a 'difference' of identity implied by the headscarf, they subscribe to a discourse that defends 'convergence' towards the image of a woman who behaves and dresses modestly. This image includes women without headscarves as well, but on the condition that they abide by certain norms of modesty. Similar to participants who define themselves as 'half covered' as opposed to 'fully covered', Zübeyde distances herself from those who 'do not accept uncovering once they cover'; hence she underlines that she does not subscribe to a solid boundary between the states of being covered and uncovered.

6.4. Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter has mainly two objectives. The first is to delineate and analyse the complex set of expectations and assumptions regarding the practice of wearing the headscarf. Within this complex set, there are seemingly contradictory assumptions about the headscarf. Analysing these assumptions helps to demonstrate how they converge on the point of constructing a collectivity of 'women with headscarves' based on an essentialized identity. The second

objective is to look into the narratives of the research participants to understand how they respond to these assumptions and expectations imposed on them. Looking into these narratives is important to see how the participants of this research, that is, lower-middle class, less educated women with headscarves working in sales jobs, deal with the contours of the essentialized identity imposed on them. It makes it possible to see how their intricate negotiations with regard to carving out a space for themselves in a precarious labor market, defy the assumed connotations of a collective identity invoked by the headscarf.

The first endeavour of the chapter is to look into how headcarf skeptic stereotypes categorize and essentialize the meanings of the headscarf. Then I shift the focus to the discourses that load the headscarf with normative connotations of displaying a commitment to the perfection of piety, and discourses which frame the headscarf as a search for identity and an assertion of cultural and religious difference.

Indeed, the discourses that frame the headscarf as an outcome of the commitment to religion, and those that frame it as a modern and unapologetic assertion of identity and difference, are profoundly different from headscarf skeptic discourses, as they work towards countering the stigmatizing stereotypes attached to women with headscarves. Yet, there are two major threads binding these different discourses.

First, all of the discourses claiming to frame the headscarf refer to a certain 'coherence' between the decision of donning the headscarf and the deportment of the women who take this decision. Headscarf skeptic discourses are built on a skepticism of this coherence, hence use every opportunity to underline

'incoherences'. The other discourses, in contrast, are built on an effort to prove 'coherence': The headscarf becomes essentially a mark of deeply rooted piety or a mark of cultural and religious difference asserted in a modern language of resisting the homogenizing norms of Westernized, secularized individual.

Joan Scott (1992) points out the shortcomings of the defenders of multiculturalism and politics of identity in Western contexts. She argues that while trying to defend 'difference', they "naturalize identity, making it a matter of biology or history or culture, an inescapable trait that can matter more or less, but is inherently a part of one's being" (p.14). What Scott suggests, instead, is to deconstruct difference itself analyze the processes of discrimination and exclusion that produce that very 'difference'. In other words, she suggests that some people are labelled as 'different' as a result of certain historical processes, and criticizes defenders of multiculturalism for accepting as given, hence reifying the notion of 'difference'.

Within the chapter, I pointed out how the discourses framing the headscarf as a modern assertion of difference and identity, are borrowing the Western oriented concepts and frames of the debate on multiculturalism. Similar to the defenders of multiculturalism and politics of identity, the scholarly discourse on the headscarf in Turkey also gets entrapped in this shortcoming that Scott points out: Headscarf becomes a matter of cultural difference, and gets to be viewed inherently as a part of one's being.

To my reading, this is exactly what the participant narratives are pointing out: The frame of cultural and religious difference that is seen fit for them, is too narrow and limited to explain and embrace their experiences with the headscarf.

The participant narratives spill over that frame. Instead of undertaking connotations of cultural and religious difference, in the narratives there is a strong tendency to avoid a discourse of difference through underlining that the headscarf bears contingent, not essential or absolute meanings in their lives. Rather than honing the contours of their identity by wearing the headscarf, the motivation is to decouple the presumed links between cultural and religious difference and the headscarf, as well as to blur the rigid boundaries between the states of being 'covered' and 'uncovered'.

The second major thread lying beneath the different frames is that they all develop categorizations to distinguish 'new and old', 'conscious and unconscious', 'traditional and modern' practices of covering[103]. In headscarf skeptic discourses, this categorization is employed to distinguish between the 'headscarf of the grandmothers', and the headscarf of young, urban women. 'Grandmothers' headscarf' is 'approved' as a private issue of piety, it is viewed as embedded in traditional, rural life whereas the latter type is condemned for bearing a strict rupture from this 'innocent' traditional practice. This rupture connotes an uprooted political fabrication, surronded by imaginaries of various threats to the social and political fabric, ranging from fundamentalist terrorism to an uncanny, threatening immodesty and excessive sexuality. In short, the 'new' headscarf is attributed strongly pejorative meanings in contrast to the 'old' headscarf which is portrayed as a genuine and sincere practice of piety.

The frame viewing the headscarf as a mark of cultural and religious difference is also profoundly invested in underlining rupture and categorizing

[103] For a discussion of 'rupture' vs. 'continuity' in practices of covering, see Şişman (2011).

'old, traditional' vs. 'new' headscarf, yet with the obvious tendency to affirm the 'new' practice by highlighting its contrasts to the 'traditional'. The young, urban women's practices of covering are portrayed as acts of resistance, both against the patriarchy of the state which surfaces in the headscarf ban; *and* against the patriarchal practices in the private realm. For example, Nilüfer Göle (1997b: 87) states:

> Islamic female attire…. includes the convention of veiling. But this sort of veiling has little in common with traditional ways of covering the body. It has even less to do with the image of a Muslim woman as docile, devoted to her family and to her traditional roles of mother and spouse.

Contrary to the headscarf skeptic discourses, this frame affirms the 'modern' headscarf insofar as the meaning it conveys is thought to coincide with modern imaginaries of asserting 'free will' and resistance to tradition (Mahmood 2005, Bilge 2010)[104].

The narratives of research participants defy such neat categorizations for they point out contestations among women for the 'ideal', most acceptable forms of covering. The graded narratives of 'covering' as 'fully covered', 'half covered', 'covered but immodest' underline such contestations. Instead of a resistance to tradition, it is possible to see accomodations to patriarchal constraints, yet accompanied with an effort to carve out a space for personal style and attractiveness, as well a space for negotiating taking on or off the scarf.

[104] Saba Mahmood (2005) and Sırma Bilge (2010) both criticize the feminist readings of the headscarf that frame it as 'resistance' to both Western dominance and male hegemony. This critique is based on an alternative reading of agency: Mahmood suggests that connecting agency to resistance and seeking an act of resistance under human action in order to deem it worthy, is a serious limitation of Western feminism. Even though I find this criticism insightful, I do not agree with her suggestion of decoupling agency from resistance and embracing forms of agency that desire 'submission to recognized authority' (Mahmood 2005: 15). This issue, including my objection, is discussed in depth in Chapter 2 of the dissertation.

Finally, it is essential to question these categorizations of new' vs. 'old', 'conscious' vs. 'unconscious' headscarf by highlighting how they overlap with class and status distinctions. Jenny White (2005) draws attention to this point. She argues that the distinction maintained in Islamist intellectual discourse between 'conscious' and 'traditional' covering is a form of elitism supported by the academic discourse focusing on 'new' headscarf. Criticizing Göle's focus on the headscarf as identity politics, White contends that this is valid only for Islamist elites, "the editors, writers, intellectuals, middle class activists, Islamist yuppies" (White 2005, p.125). What is the consequence of this middle class bias in the Islamist discourse and the scholarly studies framing the headscarf as identity politics? I would argue that some questions remain precluded. Once the modern, urban forms of headscarf get to be framed as acts of resistance and free will, experiences which do not affirm these dominant frames are lost. If I were to analyse the participant narratives exclusively from a politics of identity and difference frame, I would probably have to categorize them and explain them away as 'unconscious' veilers, motivated by tradition, as they remain outside that frame. Yet, then I would have thrown a big blanket over the intricate negotiations involving an insecure labor market, patriarchal concerns with modesty, and aspirations to more secure and higher status employment.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

7.1. Introduction

This study was set out to explore the meanings and roles of the headscarf among lower middle class women working in a low status and insecure labor market in 2000's Turkey. Arguing that social inequalities based on class, gender, level of education, and one's negotiations in the labor market act as significant factors in defining what it means to wear a headscarf, the dissertation has suggested that analyses based on assumptions of collective religious and cultural belonging are hampered by limitations. While scholarly debates in Turkey have tended to locate the headscarf issue within the broader context of the Islamic vs. secular contestation for cultural and political hegemony, the headscarf has been taken as one of the most central symbols through which such contestation unfolds. Hence an almost unquestioned link has been established between the headscarf and belonging to an Islamic identity. Consequently, there is much less discussion on how social inequalities and class distinctions fragment the connotations of

wearing the headscarf. Similarly, while scholarly debates frame the headscarf issue within the debates of secular public sphere and its exclusionary aspects, there is a shortage of empirical studies contextualizing the headscarf issue with regard to the problems of unqualified woman workers in the private sector labor market.

The experiences of women with headscarves working in private sector retail jobs demonstrate how the connotations of Islamic identity evoked by the headscarf play out in low status employment, and how the concerns related to status in the labor market influence the negotiations revolving around the headscarf. Moreover, these experiences uncover the importance of inequalities of class, status, and level of education in shaping the ways in which the headscarf is situated in a woman's life. Focusing on lower middle class women and their position in the labor market as saleswomen raises new questions and complicates the collective category of 'women with headscarves'. This collective category is argued to exist on the base of common cultural codes, religiosity, identity, belonging and lifestyle. I argue that this presumed collective category is actually fragmented, and in this dissertation I focus on the axis of class, status, and level of education that lead to various different subjectivities and forms of engagement with the headscarf. These fragmentations raise questions about the limits of a wholesale analysis based on fundamental cultural and religious attributes. Beneath this argument lies a critique of the theoretical tendency to treat culture and identity as overarching determinants which have the power to render class distinctions and social inequalities invisible.

The main empirical findings are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 deals with the question of how women with headscarves are categorized in the private sector retail jobs, and through which mechanisms and discursive strategies they are subjected to exclusion. Chapter 6 looks into how women with headscarves working in low status, relatively unqualified sales jobs explain what the headscarf means in their lives, especially as women working in highly visible, consumer contact jobs. The chapter argues that the negotiations in the labor market to secure a livelihood, as well as concerns of prestige and status with regard to norms of acceptable gender identity at the workplace, play a significant role in shaping the forms of engagement with the headscarf, which are manifold. The purpose of this conclusion chapter is not only to summarize these empirical findings but also to discuss those findings first with regard to which limitations in the existing literature they help to address, and second, with regard to their theoretical implications.

7.2. Exclusion in the Private Sector Labor Market: Looking Beyond the Public Sphere

The first major set of empirical findings of this dissertation is related to the demarcation among retail settings in terms of their policies to employ or exclude women with headscarves. Whereas it is very rare to see women with headscarves employed in large scale retail settings such as chain stores and shopping malls, it is possible to observe that they are clustered in small scale, individually owned shops and *tesettür* stores. This demarcation is mainly shaped by the interplay of

three processes. First is related to the norms of visibility in sales jobs. Sales jobs in large scale retailing, especially in clothing retail, prioritize a 'presentable and fashionable', young urban, middle class, heterosexual, slim appearance with no hints of ethnic, religious, gendered, bodily particularities. This arguably stems from the fact that large scale retailers locate themselves within the 'global marketplace' by either selling or competing with globally known brands. Within this context, they are concerned with constructing brand images compatible with the images which have global currency. The headscarf as well as old age, an overweight or differently-abled body, a transgender identity, a lower class appearance, or an accent hinting at ethnic identity mostly remains out of these norms. It is argued that especially the headscarf figures as a "particularist spatial tie that prevents (the individual) from competing effectively in the global marketplace" (Gökarıksel and Mitchell, 2005: 150). On the other hand, based on the findings of this research, I argue that this 'particularist spatial tie' has a certain market value not only in *tesettür* stores but also small scale retailers located in traditional marketplaces or small neighbourhoods. The norms of visibility and codes of conduct in small scale retailers favour modesty in saleswomen, both in terms of appearance and attitude. In these jobs, it is highly important to 'not stand out' and to some extent accommodate to the social texture of the marketplace and the neighbourhood in which the shop is located. This owes to the fact that establishing rapport and warm relations with the customers is a more salient concern when compared to large scale retailers. Whereas adopting the veneer of upper class, dressing according to latest fashion may be an asset in large scale

retail settings, it may well undermine the customer-saleswoman relation in small scale retailers, especially in lower class neighbourhoods and marketplaces. The norms of 'not standing out' are also indeed gendered. Saleswomen are expected to abide by codes of modesty assumed to be upheld by the clientele of small shops in traditional marketplaces or small neighbourhoods where people tend to maintain long term acquaintances. To put more clearly, a 'family girl' image is perceived to be an asset in establishing rapport with the customers. Within this context, women with headscarves are perceived by the employers to reflect a more compatible appearance with not only the gender norms but also class position in small scale retailers. In other words, it is widely thought that a customer from a humble socioeconomic background is likely to feel more comfortable to communicate with a saleswoman wearing the headscarf[105].

The findings summarized above suggests that in the labor market for retail sales jobs women with headscarves are categorized as a specific type of labor force, as 'humble family girls'; as potentially fit to work in small local shops, especially in conservative and/or lower middle class neighbourhoods, but as lacking the social and cultural capital to display the looks and attitude required in shopping malls and large scale retailers selling or competing with global brands. Moreover, they are categorized as a kind of labor force that is more ready to settle

[105] This finding is in line with Dilek Cindoğlu's research (2010) conducted with university educated professional women with headscarves. In that research, white collar women with headscarves explain that lower status employees in their companies, such as staff responsible from the kitchen or cleaning take the liberty to establish informal relations with the white collar employees with headscarves, calling them 'abla', 'bacı' (sister), whereas a white collar woman without a headscarf is more likely to be called 'hanımefendi' (madam).

for dead-end jobs, smaller wages, and less job security[106]. Actually, being categorized as cheap labor is a broad structural problem that effects especially unqualified woman workers regardless of the headscarf. This is mostly related to the assumption that women necessarily live within the 'security' of a family, and they are nonessential earners who contribute to the family budget. Particularly younger, single, less educated women are expected to settle for small wages, as they are assumed to live with their parents and work temporarily until they get married.[107] However, in the specific case of saleswomen with headscarves in Turkey, it is possible to argue that they are located as cheaper among cheap labor first because their options are restricted in terms of employment, and second, because an unqualified, lower class woman worker wearing a headscarf is perceived to remain out of globally circulating norms of stylish and fashionable visibility[108].

The categorization of women with headscarves as a specific kind of labor force is very significant as it works as an informal discriminatory mechanism that excludes women with headscarves from being employed in certain settings. What

[106] It has been delineated in Chapter 5 that employment in small scale retailers is -more often than not- less advantaged in terms of working conditions, working hours, wages and social benefits.

[107] This perception indeed reflects a global problem that keeps unqualified woman workers' labor cheap, especially in non-Western contexts (Freeman 1993, Ong 1987). Ong's research on Malay women working in factories shows that especially single, young women who live with their parents are preferred in factories, so that they will work for less than subsistence wages.

[108] At this point, it is indeed necessary to look into nuances, such as the norms of employment in *tesettür* chain stores. For example Tekbir, the *tesettür* brand that is competing in the global market of Islamic fashion, exclusively employs women with headscarves. However, their employees tend to be more educated when compared to the average saleswoman profile, and the company provides them with special outfits that produce a uniform, neat, upper class appearance compatible with the trends in global Islamic fashion, which distinguishes them from saleswomen with headscarves working in small scale retailers.

is even more significant is that, this discrimination and exclusion are disguised under a language of market rationality and private managerial concerns of employers. Employers in large scale retailing suggest that they aim to employ sales personnel who will be compatible with the brand image and corporate identity of the company. This 'corporate' language naturalizes discrimination not only against the headscarf but against various kinds of visible identity marks and body images that are considered to be 'unfit'. This language also works to locate the structural patterns of discrimination in the employment process out of public discussion and political contestation, instead locating them in the 'privacy' of corporate preferences. The employers also argue that this 'preference' is unlikely to be offensive to women with headscarves, because it is expected that as long as a woman keeps on her headscarf, she should be already declaring a choice to remain outside the visibility norms of large scale retailing and to work in shops that cater specifically to the Islamic population. This reasoning is based on the naturalization of the idea that Islamic and secular identities keep clear of each other, and each have their own markets, their own 'choices' to work and to shop.

7.2.1. Limitations in the Existing Literature

These findings address important limitations in the dominant scholarly debates on the repercussions of Islamic 'difference', and more particularly on the headscarf issue. As I have discussed extensively in Chapters 1 and 2, the post-1990 scholarly debates mainly tend to locate the headscarf issue with regard to the debates of secular public sphere. These debates focus on the politics of Islamic

difference that the headscarf connotes vis a vis the secular norms of visibility in the public sphere, and its symbolization of political and cultural contestations between secular and Islamic identities. The headscarf issue has been extensively analyzed with regard to its connotation of demanding recognition to unprivileged Islamic identity as opposed to the privileged position of secular identity in the public sphere. In this context, the problem of political and cultural misrecognition of the headscarf, and the statement of cultural and religious difference that women with headscarves are supposed to be making in order to gain recognition in the public sphere have been firmly established as the central concern of the headscarf discussion. This dissertation suggests that locating the headscarf issue only in the context of public and political contestations between the 'Islamic' and the 'secular' limits the ability to develop a more comprehensive view that accounts for the ways in which the 'misrecognition' of cultural difference intermeshes with problems of discrimination and exclusion in the private sector labor market.

Problematizing the exclusion of the headscarf from the state monitored public sphere may have raised promising and valuable discussions in terms of transforming the public sphere towards embracing cultural differences which remain out of hegemonic norms. Yet, it is possible to highlight two major limitations that result from focusing exclusively on the politics of cultural difference framework and on the public sphere. First, this focus does not tell us much about how hegemonic norms and excluded differences play out in the private sector labor market. In the retail sector labor market, the employment process is shielded behind a discourse of the 'privacy' of managerial decisions

which allegedly reflect 'technical', neutral, hence apolitical concerns. This discourse disguises and legitimizes discrimination by stripping the issue from its social and political aspects, and hence keeps the discrimination problem out of public debate and political contestation. Whereas it is possible to politically contest the exclusion from the state monitored public sphere by pursuing politics of identity and demanding the right to cultural difference, it is hardly so in the case of exclusion from private sector employment. Waging a struggle against disguised mechanisms of private sector labor market discrimination necessitates a legal and political struggle that questions the uncontested 'privacy' of employment decisions from the vantage point of workplace democracy and labor rights, rather than politics of identity and cultural difference.

Second, the research findings suggest that an emphasis on the cultural difference that the headscarf is supposed to be declaring does not produce the result of questioning hegemonic norms in private sector employment as it does in the state monitored public sphere. Instead of providing equal terms of employment to women with headscarves, the retail labor market categorizes them as a specific type of labor force that is 'fit' to cater to consumers who share the 'cultural difference' and identity that is supposed to be embodied by the headscarf. More vehemently, the 'cultural difference' argument even becomes a part of the discourse that legitimizes discrimination in employment insofar as it contributes to the reification of Islamic and secular identities as essentially separate from each other with clear and sharp boundaries.

When I started to work on this dissertation, which was in 2008, there was a formal headscarf ban in universities, public sector jobs and the parliament. Before I completed the dissertation, all of these bans were abolished. As of January 2014, with the new regulations[109], there are many students with headscarves enjoying their right to university education, work in public sector jobs, and there are four Members of Parliament wearing headscarves. However, it is still very rare to see saleswomen with headscarves working in shopping malls and large scale retailing that provides relatively higher status to sales employees. One might argue that legal amendments take longer to settle among the society at large, and it is normal that employers do not change their employment policies and/or employees overnight. If this is the case, we should be expecting that the abolishment of the headscarf ban in state monitored public sphere triggers a transformation in the employment policies of large scale retailers in the long term. It remains to be seen whether this will happen or not. However, the findings of this research lead me to argue otherwise: I suggest that the discrimination in this private sector labor market is nourished by different mechanisms which are bound to remain invisible

[109] The headscarf ban concerning university students is no longer implemented since 2010. This development came following JDP government's proposal for a constitutional amendment in 2008 that would abolish the ban for university students. The JDP was taken to the Constitutional Court and found guilty for undermining the constitutional principle of secularism. Yet, The Higher Education Council (YÖK) declared that enjoying university education with a headscarf should be considered as a right to education. The headscarf ban in public sector jobs and public institutions was abolished in September 2013 as a part of the set of regulations popularly known as "democratization package'. As of this date, women with headscarves can be employed in public office, and Members of Parliament can enter the Parliament with their headscarves. The police organization, judiciary and the Turkish Armed Forces have been kept out of this amendment, in other words women with headscarves can still not be employed as policewomen, army officers, judges or public prosecutors.

and uncontested as long as we continue to capture the issue within the parameters of political contestations over the public sphere and cultural difference.

7.3. Negotiating the Meanings of the Headscarf: Beyond the 'Conscious Muslim' Identity

The second major set of empirical findings discussed in this dissertation concerns the various ways in which the participants of the research formulate the meanings of the headscarf in their lives, and how the concerns related to class, status and gender inequalities work to shape these meanings.

The first pattern observed in the narratives is that, the headscarf does not necessarily connote a commitment to design one's life entirely according to Islamic precepts. The narratives of the participants show that they feel under the pressure to declare such a commitment, and this pressure is a source of discontent in their lives. The participant narratives are permeated with women's efforts to distance themselves from the meanings loaded on the headscarf, such as a coherent religious identity and a commitment to live according to Islamic precepts. These efforts surface often in the argument that covering can be practiced in different degrees. Many participants referred to themselves as 'half covered' women; by which they mean that they are not committed to the goal of designing their appearance –or their lives, for that matter- strictly according to the norms of *tesettür*. The meaning of being 'half covered' was defined by constructing a distance from the image of a 'fully covered' woman, which, in the narratives, refers to a woman who is very strict not only about covering her body,

but also about refraining from communication with men. This imagination of a 'fully covered' woman surfaced in many narratives in different forms. In some narratives, a fully covered woman was someone with better means, who did not have to work and mingle with strange men -as saleswomen have to do-; so being 'fully covered' was depicted as a luxury of wealthier women. In other narratives, she was a woman who became a 'radical Islamist' overnight, and who has a claim to know Islam better than other women. In this case, being 'fully covered' evoked the image of an Islamist woman, who is criticized in the narratives for claiming superior knowledge of religion and enjoying the authority and status that comes with it. In other words, it is possible to trace strong implications of class cleavage, status inequalities and resentment based on these. Covering oneself 'fully', with face veils, gloves, chadors[110], was also regarded as an 'extreme' practice that made a woman 'stick out' of mainstream norms of modesty and attract unwanted attention. For the participants who referred to themselves as 'half covered', it was particularly important to accommodate to the social context in which they lived and worked.

As it is evident in the paragraph above, being perceived as a 'modest' woman was a very central concern for the participants of this research. Indeed, modesty is a very elusive term with meanings that vary according to the context. For many participants of this research, that is, lower middle class, less educated

[110] This finding is compatible with Gökarıksel and Secor's research (2012) which shows that women with headscarves are 'othering' women in chadors (çarşaf) by defining them as hypocrites, or by depicting the chador as a foreign garment, as opposed to the *tesettür* which is depicted as the 'authentic' Turkish women's clothing.

women working in sales jobs, to what extent the headscarf relates to modesty depended on the level of education, and prospects of a secure, high-status career. For example, it was frequently argued that taking off the headscarf in order to seek higher education and/or work in a high status job would be acceptable whereas uncovering without such a prospect of status and security would cause suspicions about a woman's religious conviction and modesty. There were participants who made it clear that they would consider uncovering if they had the possibility of finding a public sector job, such as a teaching job[111]. Relatively older, married participants with grown up children were less likely to consider uncovering, as they thought they had far passed the point of aspiring higher status jobs.

Looking into the negotiations in which women weigh their prospects in the labor market, the concerns about how they will be perceived and consider uncovering according to these factors is indeed intriguing in terms of tracing the influence of structural constraints and possibilities in shaping the meanings of the headscarf. What is even more intriguing is to trace how these negotiations also lead the participants to avoid a discourse that frames the headscarf as deeply rooted in their identity and inseparable from their piety. Because in that case, negotiating the headscarf would mean compromising religiosity and identity. The narratives instead reveal a tendency to refer to the headscarf as a practice which remains 'exterior' to identity and which cannot define a woman's piety. One

[111] At the time of the research, there was a formal headscarf ban on public sector jobs.

participant put this as follows: “Religion is something inside of you. It is not about covering on the outside, it is about belief in the inside”. This participant was unwittingly gesturing to the very basics of secular discourse by decoupling public assertions of ‘Islamic difference and identity’ from piety formulated as a ‘private’ affair.

7.3.1. Limitations in the Existing Literature

The intricate negotiations revolving around the headscarf raise questions with regard to the most dominant lines of argumentation in the post-1990 literature on women, Islam and headscarves in Turkey. As I have articulated in detail in Chapters 1 and 2, these lines of argumentation discuss the headscarf issue through a politics of difference and identity framework. The headscarf issue is located within the broader cultural distinctions and contestations of hegemony between Islamic and secular sections of society. From this vantage point, the headscarf is loaded with a series of symbolic meanings: It figures as a conscious declaration of religious difference and Islamic identity. Women with headscarves are given roles as actors of an identity movement that resists the hegemony of secular norms in the public sphere. This point of view attributes special significance to the transformation from being ‘traditional Muslims’ to ‘Islamists’ (Göle, 1997b); in other words the transformation towards defining and defending one’s relation to religion in terms of modern identity claims. The emphasis on this transformation is strengthened by defining young, urban women with headscarves as ‘new veilers’ who make a statement of ‘cultural difference’ and challenge the

dominant, homogenizing, Western based understanding of modernity by claiming visibility in modern public sphere. Another popular concept employed to emphasize the transformation in the religious woman identity is 'conscious Muslim', which connotes that "one's entire life should be led in entire accordance with Islamic precepts" (Saktanber, 2002: 164). There are indeed nuances between the concepts of 'new veiler' and 'conscious Muslim'. The previous concept stresses the political resistance to the homogenizing aspects of the public sphere, whereas the latter one puts more emphasis on the will to establish an Islamic way of life against the grain of secularization of life. Notwithstanding their nuances, the common thread binding both concepts is that they frame a 'new Islamic woman identity' weaving together a deep religious conviction, and an almost irreversible determination to live by Islamic precepts. Within this framework, the headscarf is attributed an essence rooted deeply in a modern articulation of identity; the decision to wear the headscarf is portrayed as necessarily an act of asserting political and cultural difference.

It is significant to note that the above mentioned lines of argumentation are established through research on middle class, mostly university educated, urban women with headscarves, whose storylines are embedded in the surge of Islamic middle class, and the concomitant mobility of Islamic urban groups from the 'periphery' to the 'center' in terms of economic, cultural and social capital. In other words, scholarship has mostly been interested in the transforming meanings and connotations of the headscarf in line with the mobility from the 'periphery' to the 'center'. Therefore, the assertion of Islamic identity in urban, upper class,

modern contexts, and its social, political and cultural connotations in terms of challenging the hegemony of Western based Republican norms on concepts such as 'modern', 'civilized', has been located at the center of headscarf research. When there is so much emphasis on the middle class, the dominant axis of distinction are drawn through cultural variables. For instance, the 'new veilers' are construed as 'new', not because of their relation to upward social mobility, but because of their 'cultural distinctions' from rural, elder women who were covering due to traditional influences. The 'new veilers', to the contrary, are portrayed to be in sharp rupture from those traditional influences.

This dissertation does not aim to argue against the point that the headscarf may be experienced as an indicator of deep religious conviction, or a devoted commitment to Islamic identity in the lives of some women. Yet, the study points out the problems in establishing this experience as *the* dominant storyline that claims to encompass the experiences of all urban, young women who claim an active presence in modern urban life with their headscarves on. The findings of this research provide us with insight about the position of lower middle class, less educated women with headscarves vis a vis this dominant storyline. Contrary to the dominant arguments in the literature, the findings of this research point out an effort to decouple the headscarf from a commitment to live 'in entire accordance with Islamic precepts', or from a commitment to Islamic identity as the predominant source of belonging. The findings uncover articulations of the meanings of the headscarf as rather fluid, dynamic and contingent on patriarchal bargains and negotiations for higher status jobs. More importantly, the findings

demonstrate that the intermingling concerns and negotiations related to class, status, and norms of acceptable womanhood have influence in shaping the meanings of the headscarf. It is significant to note that this dissertation does not claim to develop a comprehensive explanation of what wearing the headscarf means in 2000's Turkey. It rather attempts to account for the roles of class, status and gender in shaping those meanings, which leads to the argument that comprehensive, wholesale, absolute explanations claiming a cultural unity among 'women with headscarves' as a group, are misleading.

7.4. Theoretical Implications

The major theoretical implications of this study are twofold: First, the study points out the limitations of singling out culture and identity as foci of analysis at the expense of disregarding how formations of culture and identity are entangled in material inequalities in access to resources, and problems of social, economic, gendered insecurities. The second critical point concerns the reification of group identities based on portrayals of systematic differences between cultural 'groups'. In that regard, the study is in conversation with the critical discussion on politics of identity, difference and recognition.

The first major theoretical concern of this study is to question the focus on the politics of identity and attaining cultural recognition as the predominant ways to attain social justice. Demanding to freely assert one's identity and be respected for all her cultural particularities is a significant way of political claimsmaking. However, it is limited insofar as it disregards the significance of material

inequalities. This criticism is informed by Nancy Fraser's critique of an identity and culture based model of recognition. She argues that focusing exclusively on the politics of culture and identity equates social justice with the recognition of cultural particularities and pushes issues of material inequalities out of the imaginations of social justice.

I argue that the significance of Fraser's critique is verified by the findings of this study. The language of attaining cultural recognition to Islamic identity falls short of penetrating the worlds of women with headscarves who are disadvantaged not only because of the 'misrecognition' of the headscarf, but also because of their class position, low level of education, and the position of being vulnerable, low status, insecure woman workers. Yet, whereas we see the headscarf issue being discussed over and over in terms of struggles of identity and culture, we seldom see it being discussed within a comprehensive framework that accounts for the interrelated problems of precarious labor, workplace democracy, women's labor, or patriarchal constraints at the workplace. When structural social and economic inequalities are folded into, and rendered invisible by the problem of cultural recognition, analyses are insulated from the need to engage critically with ongoing social structural processes that constantly reproduce inequalities. It appears as if the headscarf issue has academic purchase only insofar as it can be captured within an exclusively culturalist framework. Yet, the problems of the participants of this research are being reproduced everyday through lack of social security, surge of informal labor, exploitation of unqualified woman workers in

dead end jobs, legally and politically unhampered processes of discrimination in the private sector labor market, and so on.

The second major theoretical concern of the dissertation is to critically engage with the discursive reification of 'group identities' based on a defence of 'authentic culture' that is claimed to make a group systematically different from 'other' cultural groups. This problem of reification is problematized especially by left oriented critiques of multiculturalism (Phillips 2007, Fraser 2000, Benhabib 2002, Barry 2002). These critiques mainly argue that cultural distinctions between different groups living together are exaggerated to the point of portraying group identities as 'intrinsically oppositional' to each other (Phillips 2007), and as overly homogeneous within themselves (Fraser 2000, Benhabib 2002). This portrayal bears vehement risks, such as overlooking intragroup conflicts and power struggles, and ossifying cultural stereotypes that turn out to produce further disadvantages for already unprivileged groups.

The findings of this dissertation resonate with the concerns raised by these critiques. First, the findings complicate the neat categorization of Islamic identity and culture which insulates the formation of subjectivities from everyday negotiations related to class, status and gender. This study demonstrates that women with headscarves do not necessarily define themselves within readily defined, solid contours of religiosity and Islamic identity. These contours are fluid and dynamic: They are constantly reshaped, blurred, challenged through intricate negotiations and contestations seeking better ways of existence in relation to the intersections of class, status, and gender inequalities that an individual is situated

in. Second, the findings also lead us to question the extent to which the portrayal of the headscarf as the indicator of a 'cultural difference' work towards providing prospects of equal participation for women with headscarves in the private sector labor market. It is very significant to point out that in the retail labor market, women with headscarves are categorized as a specific type of labor force that is 'fit' to cater to consumers who share the 'cultural difference' and identity that is supposed to be embodied by the headscarf. In other words, they have a 'market value' for their supposed declaration of 'authentic' culture. Hence, with regard to the case investigated in this study, stressing the headscarf as a mark of 'difference' becomes a reason to be categorized and stereotyped, instead of a way to empower women with headscarves.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS USED IN 2009

1- Çarşıda çalışmaya nasıl karar verdiniz? Çalışma hayatında var olmaktan genel olarak memnun musunuz? Çalışan bir insan olmanın iyi yönleri, kötü yönleri neler?

2- Ailenizdeki öteki genç kızlar açıklar mı, kapalılar mı, çalışıyorlar mı?

3- Çalışma hayatında türban nedeniyle bir zorlukla karşılaşıyor musunuz? Müşterilerin ve patronlarınızın örtünmeniz konusunda tavrı nedir?

4- Ne kadar ücret alıyorsunuz? Örtülü olmasanız daha mı farklı alırdınız / ne kadar alırdınız? Bir tahmininiz var mı?

5- Aynı dükkanda ya da civar dükkanlarda başını örtmeyen çalışanların müşterilerle, patronla diyaloglarında fark görüyor musunuz? İş hayatı açık kadınlar için için daha zor ya da daha kolay mıdır sizce?

6- Erkek çalışma arkadaşlarınızla ilişkileriniz nasıl? Herhangi sıkıntılı bir durum ortaya çıkıyor mu? Erkek müşterilerle ilgili bir sıkıntı var mı?

7- Çalışmanızı aileniz (evliyseniz kocanız, değilseniz babanız/anneniz) nasıl karşılıyor? Çalışmayı en başta siz mi istediniz? İkna etmeniz gerekti mi babanızı / kocanızı?

8- Çalıştığınız için (Evliler için) eşinizden ve evdeki öteki yetişkinlerden ev işlerinde destek görüyor musunuz? Evde daha çok söz sahibi olabiliyor musunuz?

(Bekarlar için) Erkek arkadaşınız var mı? Nasıl bir evlilik düşünüyorsunuz?

Eşiniz başınızı açmanızı istese?

9- Sizin hayatınızla annenizin hayatı arasında nasıl farklar var?

10- Genel olarak sizce "modern kadın" nasıl bir kadındır?

- Ben size bakınca çalışan, tesettürlü bir genç kız / kadın görüyorum. Siz kendinizi nasıl görüyorsunuz / nasıl tarif edersiniz?

11- Siz kapanmaya- örtünmeye ne zaman ve nasıl karar verdiniz?

12- Yılbaşı kutlaması yapıyor musunuz?

13- Başınızı açarak çalışmaya karar verseniz, ailenizin tavrı nasıl olur?

Diyelim öğretmen oldunuz ve çalışmak için başınızı açmak durumunda kaldınız. Aileniz ne der?

14- Dini vecibelerinizi yerine getirebiliyor musunuz? (Çalışırken) Namaz kılabiliyor musunuz?

15- Kızınız varsa / olsa büyüyünce çalışmasını ister misiniz?

16- Kızınızın başını örtmesini ister miydiniz?

17- Kızınız üniversite okumak istedi ve sınavı kazandı diyelim. Fakat başını açması gerekecek. Ne düşünürsünüz / ne yapmasını istersiniz?

18- Meslek sahibi (avukat, öğretmen, doktor) olsanız neler farklı olurdu hayatınızda? (alternatif: Meslek sahibi (avukat, öğretmen, doktor) olan kadınların hayatı nasıldır sizce?)

19- Erkek kardeşiniz / abiniz var mı? Ne işle meşgul?

20- Çok eşlilik meselesi hakkında ne düşünürsünüz? Eşiniz "Dinimizce müsaade var, ben ikinci bir eş istiyorum" dese ne dersiniz?

21- Kadınların ve erkeklerin fıtratlarından gelen farklılıklar var mıdır sizce? Nelerdir?

Peki kadın – erkek eşitliği denince ne dersiniz? Gündelik hayatta nelerde eşitsiniz? Nelerde değilsiniz?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS USED IN 2012

1- Sabah kaçta iş başlıyor? Kaç gün izin var? Sigorta var mı?

2- Ne satıyorsunuz? Pahalı mi satilan şeyler genelde? Pazarlık yapılıyor mu? Müşteri profili genel olarak nasıl?

3- Çalışmaktan genel olarak memnun musunuz? Çalışan bir insan olmanın iyi yönleri, kötü yönleri neler?

4- Ailenizdeki öteki genç kızlar çalışıyorlar mı? Açık / kapalı?

5- İş arama sürecinde en çok zorlandığınız konu ne oluyor? İşverenin nasıl beklentileri oluyor?

6- Görüntü olarak neler bekliyor patron sizce, nasıl görünmenizi bekliyor? (kapalılık – açıklık iş ararken etkili oluyor mu? Kapalı olduğunuz için / olmadığınız için reddedildiğiniz iş oldu mu?)

7- Patronları nasıl bir görüntü ya da tavır kızdırır? (giysi, takı, vs.) Hiç böyle bir şeye tanık oldunuz mu?

8- Çalışma hayatında başörtüsü nedeniyle bir zorlukla karşılaşıyor musunuz? Müşterilerin ve patronlarınızın örtünmeniz konusunda tavrı nedir?

9- Sizin hayatınızla annenizin hayatı arasında nasıl farklar var? Hanginizin hayatı daha iyi?

10- Siz kapanmaya- örtünmeye ne zaman ve nasıl karar verdiniz?

11- Başınızı açarak çalışmaya karar verseniz, bir zorlukla karşılaşır mıydınız? Ailenizde, işyerinde tepki alır mıydınız?

12- Özendiğiniz bir iş / meslek var mı? Şu işi yapsam hayatım daha guzel olurdu dediğiniz?